The Language of British Electoral Politics 1880-1910

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The Language of British Electoral Politics 1880-1910

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Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Department of History, School of Arts and Humanities.

King's College London, University of London

March, 2012

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation develops a new methodology for the study of British election speeches, and indeed political language more generally. It electronically analyses purpose-built multi-million word databanks ('corpora') of Liberal and Conservative public speeches delivered in the nine general elections held during the golden age of platform oratory, 1880-1910. It uses the region of East Anglia as its central case-study.

The corpora are used to investigate the presentation of popular Liberalism and Conservatism by platform speakers during this crucial period. The corpora are interrogated with computer software to systematically and authoritatively quantify how far key issues, values, traditions, and personalities manifested themselves in wider party discourse. This is reinforced with a close manual reading of the speeches in order to strike an equal methodological balance between novel quantification and traditional qualification.

As such, the dissertation is a potential answer to a much-debated methodological problem in Political History which has arisen from the impact of the postmodernist 'linguistic turn'. Namely, how can historians of political language combine close readings of speeches and writings with a wider explanatory ambition, and assess power, scope, and typicality in wider discourses of billions of words?

The dissertation uses corpora to reassess a number of central historical debates over four chronological chapters. The first finds that historians have considerably underestimated the transformative impact of the 1883-85 reforms on rural party language, and the purchase of Chamberlain's Unauthorized Programme. The second and third contend that the centrality of Home Rule and Imperialism in the late 1880s and 1890s have been exaggerated. The fourth argues that the New Liberalism's linguistic impact was relatively weak, and failed to comprehensively contain the message of the emerging Labour alternative.

More fundamentally, the dissertation contends that electoral language was a distinct discourse: an elastic, interconnected *debate* rather than parallel streams of speeches which passively reflected wider developments in society and politics. In this respect, it argues that Conservatives better understood, and better exploited, the platform as a partisan debating tool in these years.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This dissertation – in production for five and a half years – could not have been written without the contributions of a number of individuals to whom I am much indebted:

Dr. Paul Readman, for supervising the project. As well as providing far-sighted advice throughout, he also commented on written work very quickly. His course – 'Electoral Politics in Britain, 1867-1945' – which I took as an undergraduate on an exchange programme, was one of the main reasons I became interested in this subject. As well as a good academic relationship, my greatest debt to him is personal. He showed faith in me and my project at the early stages when, for long periods, it looked likely that I would never be able to fund it. In this respect, his willingness to write me no less than 58 references – to all manner of strange places in search of funds – was essential. My PhD project itself has also no doubt been as unusual and challenging to supervise as I must have been. Few supervisors would have been so open-minded, and for that in particular, he has my profound thanks.

Prof. Willard McCarty, for acting as the second-supervisor at the department of Digital Humanities. His input into the project went well beyond offering technical advice. Most useful was his wisdom, and ability to view methodological problems through a lens largely uncoloured by the preconceptions and biases which naturally attach themselves to those who practice any academic discipline in isolation. His questions of the methodology were often simple, but always searching. The wide range of references that can be found in this dissertation are in large part a testimony to him.

Dr. Paul Seaward, for inviting me to work as a research assistant at the History of Parliament Trust. I enjoyed this work immensely, and it provided vital flexible income that helped support my PhD.

Prof. Jonathan Parry, for commenting and helping develop various early drafts of this PhD proposal, and for writing a large number of references.

Prof. Arthur Burns and Dr. John Lavagnino, for conducting my upgrade viva, and for making many helpful suggestions for improvement.

Dr. Paul Rayson, was the first Corpus Linguist I met some years before my project, and immediately piqued my interest in the field. He also later suggested a number of references which were very useful.

Dr. Kathryn Rix, for supplying some useful references.

Drs. Jon Lawrence, and Alex Windscheffel, for providing an enjoyable and intellectually stimulating viva examination.

The Arts and Humanities Data Service (now the Centre for e-Research), for introducing me to the Digital Humanities, and ultimately in encouraging me to pursue this methodology.

The staff at the Ipswich and Norwich Record Offices, the King's Lynn Public Library, and Yarmouth Public Library were thoroughly professional and courteous throughout my many visits. At Ipswich, I would especially like to acknowledge the searchroom assistant Bruce Martin, who remembered me – and my research – each time I visited over more than half a decade. I would also like to thank the staff at Yarmouth, who sourced a large number of local speeches themselves on my instructions. At the Norwich Heritage Centre, I would particularly like to praise the installation of the microfilm-scanning computer, and the convenient accessibility of its USB port.

To my parents, for their forbearance and acceptance of the path I eventually choose for myself, and for their eternal willingness to provide emotional and practical support whenever and wherever it was needed. In particular, I ultimately owe my interest in elections to my father, and some late nights.

The Empire Fish Bar, the Fisherman's Hut, the Tall House, the Bazou Inn, and Chop Chop, for providing late-opening refuge points for a hungry PhD student on a tight budget.

The members of the Debating and Geek Societies, in whose company I spent many happy hours.

Jacob Howard, the man who, over the years this project germinated, accompanied me in reminiscing and watching the world go by over pint glasses in the Cittie of Yorke, the Knights Templar, the Churchill, the Woodman, the Sherlock Holmes, and others. There can't be many men worthy of owing a Zoatimental, but I think the best compliment I can give him is that he is one of them.

Tim Mannveille, my flatmate for three years, whose enquiring and curious mind encouraged me to see problems – both academic and real life – from unusual but always insightful perspectives.

Zoe Bidgood, Gina Blaxill, David Blaxill, Pamela De La Fosse, Frankie Evans, Chris Hall, Jacob Howard, Robert Knapp, Taym Saleh, and Tom Wein, for acting as proofreaders.

The zuu-zuus on the zuu-zuu mat, who were an important source of mental and physical comfort during the days spent preparing for my viva.

Gina Blaxill, a person with whom I have shared so much for so long. She helped keep my life colourful, and made the times away from research many times more enjoyable. From the Historian, to Soldier Island, through the Hidden Palace, to the latest finale of Chronomania. Thank you, Inspector.

It also seems apt to acknowledge the people who really made this dissertation possible: the often forgotten men who mounted the platform to talk for many hours about politics, whether or not anyone was actually listening. Writing today in an age where popular political communication is relegated largely to soundbites, slogans, and photocalls, it is difficult to begrudge them at least some small degree of admiration.

Funding

This PhD was twice rejected by the Arts and Humanities Research Council for a scholarship. As it transpired, I probably owe them a somewhat ironic thanks, as the project was instead funded in its entirety by a rather unlikely combination of voluntary bodies. I owe these organisations an enormous debt for their charity, support, and belief in me and my topic. I hope this dissertation – and *The Alternative Guide to Postgraduate Funding* – represent at least some repayment for the money and faith invested in me. I would therefore like to thank the following public and charitable bodies:

Body	**Year(s) Supported**
King's College London	2008,2009, 2010, 2011
Leverhulme Trades Charities Trust	2009, 2010
Sir Richard Stapley Educational Trust	2008, 2009, 2010
Leatherseller's Company	2008, 2009
Newby Trust	2007, 2008, 2009
St. Clement Dane Educational Foundation	2007, 2008
Sidney Perry Foundation	2008, 2009, 2010
Ruby and Will George Trust	2008, 2009, 2010
Milly Apthorp Charitable Trust	2007, 2008
Humanitarian Trust	2007, 2011
Conrad Russell Fund	2008, 2009
Roger and Sarah Bancroft Clark Trust	2009
Central Research Fund (University of London)	2008, 2009
Royal Historical Society	2007, 2008, 2009
KCL Small Research Grants	2007, 2008, 2009
Lynne Grundy Memorial Trust	2008

Finally, I must thank Shuzhi Zhou, whose love was there at every turn: through happiness, depression, and uncertainty. In practical terms, her skills in data manipulation and visualisation were invaluable, and the graphs throughout the dissertation owe much to her. But more important was her smile: it was never far away. This dissertation is dedicated to her, still shining in the darkness.

TECHNICAL GLOSSARY

This dissertation occasionally uses technical vocabulary from the domain of Corpus Linguistics. The key terms are defined below:★

Antconc and TextStat: Free software programs used to interrogate the corpora throughout this dissertation. The programs enable a variety of searching techniques, although *Antconc* and especially *TextStat* are very much at the basic end of the spectrum of programs available.

C**ollocate:** Particular words which tend to co-occur more frequently than would be expected by chance. Certain words can therefore be seen to be lexically attracted to one another, for example 'tariff' and 'Chamberlain', or 'farm' and 'land'. It is often interesting to nominate a particular word (e.g. 'Ireland') and see what other words reliably collocate with it.

Concordance: A concordance is the staple technique used to interrogate corpora. A concordance counts the number of times a nominated word appears in a corpus, and displays each occurrence (or 'hit') in their original context as a list of **KWICs** (allowing them to be checked).

Corpus/Corpora: A large collection of linguistic data (in this case, transcriptions of election speeches) that has been designed to be representative of a particular language domain or variety, with its size and content having been carefully taken into account. This careful design and consideration of representativeness differentiates corpora from other electronic text resources, such as text archives (e.g. *The Old Bailey Online*, or *The Times Digital Advice*). Corpora are invariably machine-readable, and span hundreds of thousands –often millions – of words. This enables patterns of the occurrence of vocabulary, and lexical and grammatical items, to be investigated with computers using special software programs such as **TextStat** and **Antconc**. Throughout this dissertation, 'corpus' is also taken as a general methodological word indicating the general analytical operations which are commonly performed with corpora.

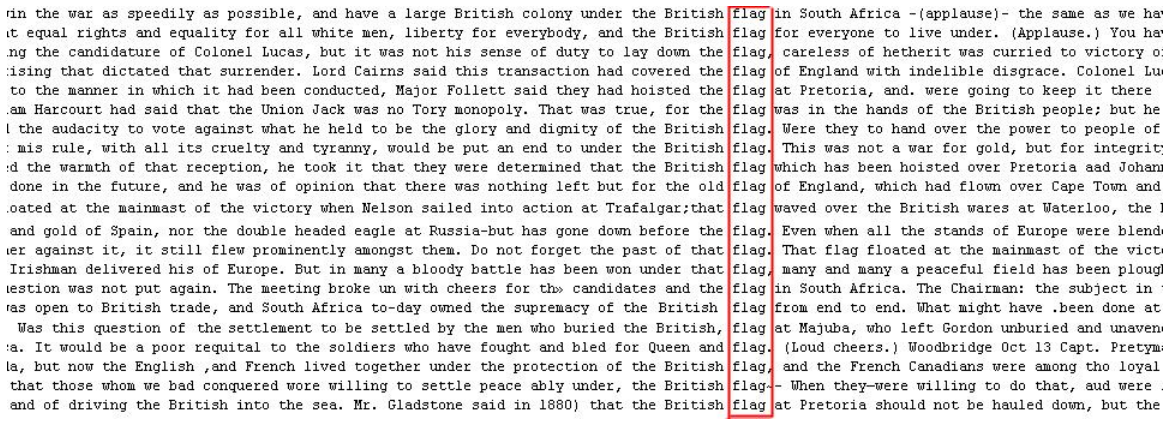
East Anglian Corpus: A one-million word corpus of election speeches from Norfolk and Suffolk, 1880-1910, taken from the local press. It is the main quantitative engine of this dissertation, and is comprised of equal election-by-election subsections for each contest between 1880 and December 1910, for both Liberals and Conservatives. See Appendix A for full notes on its anatomy.

Hits: The number of times a **lemma** is mentioned in a given corpus, or corpus subsection.

★Parts of this section draw heavily upon the glossary in S. Adolphs, *Introducing Electronic Text Analysis* (Trowbridge, 2006), pp.136-40.

Keyword: A word selected to be part of a **taxonomy**.

KWIC: ('Key Word in Context'). A method by which words can be viewed in their original context en masse, allowing them to be double-checked, and investigated further. KWIC is an important quality-control mechanism which prevents the quantitative analysis of corpora from becoming blind, and ensuring the user is never removed from the original feel of the text. An example of a KWIC on the keyword 'flag' (In the general election of 1900, amongst East Anglian Conservative speakers) can be seen below:


rin the war as speedily as possible, and have a large British colony under the British flag in South Africa -(applause)- the same as we ha
it equal rights and equality for all white men, liberty for everybody, and the British flag for everyone to live under. (Applause.) You ha
ng the candidature of Colonel Lucas, but it was not his sense of duty to lay down the flag, careless of hetherit was curried to victory o
ising that dictated that surrender. Lord Cairns said this transaction had covered the flag of England with indelible disgrace. Colonel Lu
to the manner in which it had been conducted, Major Follett said they had hoisted the flag at Pretoria, and. were going to keep it there
am Harcourt had said that the Union Jack was no Tory monopoly. That was true, for the flag was in the hands of the British people; but he
l the audacity to vote against what he held to be the glory and dignity of the British flag. Were they to hand over the power to people of
mis rule, with all its cruelty and tyranny, would be put an end to under the British flag. This was not a war for gold, but for integrit
d the warmth of that reception, he took it that they were determined that the British flag which has been hoisted over Pretoria aad Johan
done in the future, and he was of opinion that there was nothing left but for the old flag of England, which had flown over Cape Town and
oated at the mainmast of the victory when Nelson sailed into action at Trafalgar;that flag waved over the British wares at Waterloo, the
and gold of Spain, nor the double headed eagle at Russia-but has gone down before the flag. Even when all the stands of Europe were blend
er against it, it still flew prominently amongst them. Do not forget the past of that flag. That flag floated at the mainmast of the vict
Irishman delivered his of Europe. But in many a bloody battle has been won under that flag, many and many a peaceful field has been plough
estion was not put again. The meeting broke un with cheers for th» candidates and the flag in South Africa. The Chairman: the subject in
as open to British trade, and South Africa to-day owned the supremacy of the British flag from end to end. What might have .been done at
Was this question of the settlement to be settled by the men who buried the British, flag at Majuba, who left Gordon unburied and unaven
a. It would be a poor requital to the soldiers who have fought and bled for Queen and flag. (Loud cheers.) Woodbridge Oct 13 Capt. Pretym
la, but now the English ,and French lived together under the protection of the British flag, and the French Canadians were among tho loyal
that those whom we bad conquered wore willing to settle peace ably under, the British flag-- When they—were willing to do that, aud were
and of driving the British into the sea. Mr. Gladstone said in 1880) that the British flag at Pretoria should not be hauled down, but the

Lemma: The headword for all possible inflections of that word. For example, the lemma 'farm' includes 'farms', 'farmer', 'farming', 'farmed', and 'farmland'. The lemma 'British' also includes 'Britain', 'Britishness', 'Briton', 'Britannia', and Britisher'. Lemmas are mainly used to facilitate searching, and the communication of search results.

National Speakers Corpus: A 1.5 million word corpus of speeches from frontbench speakers issued at election time, as reported in *The Times*. It is used in a supplementary capacity to the East Anglian Corpus throughout the dissertation. It is comprised of election-by-election subsections for each contest between 1880 and December 1910, for both Liberals and Conservatives. See Appendix A for full notes on its anatomy.

Parliamentary Debates Corpus: A supplementary corpus comprised of all Parliamentary debates recorded in Hansard, in the year before each general election. It is used only a handful of times throughout the dissertation, in comparative contexts. See Appendix A for full notes on its anatomy.

Reference Corpus: It is possible to electronically compare two corpora, and for the software program to highlight words which appear significantly more often (according to a mathematical metric [log-likelihood ratio]) in one than in the other. The corpus that is nominated as the comparator is termed the

'reference corpus'. This would allow a user, for example, to compare East Anglian Liberal language in 1885 against various potential reference corpora, such as East Anglian Conservative language in 1885, national speakers in 1885, or against East Anglian Liberal language in 1906, and so on. Using reference corpora is a powerful technique for shedding light on words that are distinct within different language groups. Note that of the two programs this dissertation uses, only **Antconc** supports the use of reference corpora.

Taxonomy: A fixed group of words which are selected to track a particular issue, concept, or linguistic phenomenon. A five-word taxonomy of Imperialism, for example, might consist of the **lemmas** 'Empire', 'imperial, 'colony', 'Britain', and 'flag'. Taxonomies are not designed to necessarily be exhaustive, but to capture a large portion of the appropriate language.

Wildcard (*): A wildcard is a corpus-searching technique where the 'stem' of a word is searched for, followed by a *. The software program then displays all words which start with (for example) 'farm', allowing the user to search more quickly and powerfully for all the variations of particular words (see '**lemma**' above). Note that of the two programs this dissertation uses, only **Antconc** supports the use of wildcards.

Word Frequency List: A 'league table' which shows words which appear most often within a corpus. The top of the list invariably shows basic words such as 'the', 'in', 'and' etc. Comparing frequency lists for different parties, elections etc. is also a powerful and empirical investigative technique. An example of a word frequency list (For East Anglian Conservatives in 1886) can be seen below:

Rank	Freq	Word
1	2860	the
2	1738	of
3	1706	to
4	1299	and
5	1082	that
6	830	in
7	820	a
8	739	was
9	616	Mr
10	526	had
11	486	he
12	461	they
13	459	it
14	458	would
15	457	not
16	402	be
17	386	for
18	369	I
19	302	this
20	301	which
21	294	his
22	293	were
23	289	as
24	283	at
25	282	who
26	281	their
27	260	by
28	253	with
29	248	Cheers
30	238	Gladstone
31	235	have
32	233	on
33	227	Ireland
34	224	but

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INTRODUCTION

The Challenge of Reintegration in Political History★

I

Background

'Over a thousand candidates for Parliamentary honours, all speaking at the same time, asserting and denying, arguing or entreating, speaking not merely for days, but weeks, to audiences of hundreds of thousands'.[1]

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, party political platform speeches excited enormous enthusiasm. The years 1880-1914 in particular have widely been described as the 'golden age' of extra-parliamentary oratory and political engagement: an era where interaction between electors and parties was uniquely regular, verbose, and influential.[2] A typical candidate in the nine general elections held between the Third Reform Act and the Great War often spoke at over a hundred meetings in a constituency campaign alone, meaning that – at a conservative estimate – around half a billion words were uttered from platforms up and down the country in the course of a single campaign. The opening quotation, taken from Henry Jephson's *The Platform, its Rise and Progress* (1892) reflected the centrality of political stump oratory to the age. The platform had its critics: Jephson himself complained of 'political oratorical pandemonium' in 1888 and *The Times* in the same year bemoaned that 'lamentations over the endless flow of verbiage are in vain'.[3] However, Jephson also conceded that the platform was 'the instrument by which liberty-loving people have won their freedom, without bloodshed or disorder' and *The Times* similarly recognised the British 'popular love of speech-making'.[4]

While the public theatre and rumbustiousness of the hustings was a well-established electoral tradition dating back to the Hanoverian period, British politicians did not fully embrace the platform until the Second Reform Act of 1867 which more than trebled the borough electorate by the early 1870s.[5] In this respect, public speeches (and their thorough reporting in the local and national press)

★ The historiographical and methodological discussion in this chapter (and the next) also appear in abbreviated form in L. Blaxill, 'Quantifying the Language of British Politics, 1880-1914', *Historical Research* (forthcoming).

[1] H. Jephson, *The Platform, its Rise and Progress* (New York and London, 1892), vol.2, pp.522-3.

[2] J. Meisel, *Public Speech and the culture of public life in the age of Gladstone* (New York, 2001), pp.1-3; H. Matthew, 'Rhetoric and Politics' in P. Waller (ed.), in *Politics and Social Change in Modern Britain* (Brighton, 1987), p.49 ; J. Dunbabin, 'Electoral Reforms and their outcomes in the United Kingdom, 1865-1900', in T. Gourvish and A. O'Day (eds.), *Later Victorian Britain* (Basingstoke, 1988), p.118.

[3] H. Jephson, 'A By-Election Contest', *Time*, Jun 1888, p.683; *The Times*, 23 Jan 1888.

[4] Jephson, *The Platform, it's Rise and Progress*, vol.2, p. 574.

[5] J. Lawrence, *Electing our Masters: the Hustings in British Politics from Hogarth to Blair* (Oxford, 2009), pp.36-70.

were by far the most powerful available tool for reaching the mass electorates of towns and cities. Indeed, by 1873, *The Times* recognised that 'we have become a nation of public speakers…we are now more than ever a debating, that is, a Parliamentary people'.[6] However, the emergence of the platform as a truly national and universal tradition was completed by the reforms of 1883-85,[7] which extended the 1867 provisions to the counties. This enfranchised the agricultural labourer, and encouraged the development of similar electioneering machinery and cultures of public oratory in rural areas. In East Anglia in 1885, the *East Anglian Daily Times* remarked that 'The political battle of present day is conducted amidst a blaze of publicity....electors are no longer boxed up all night in a public house and taken to the poll in an omnibus, but are brought to attend public meetings, where the fiercest light is shed on questions of the day', while the *Eastern Daily Press* observed that 'Villages where no meetings have been held this century have been visited and eager crowds have been present'.[8] By 1885, mounting the platform before a potentially hostile audience was no longer an optional electioneering tool: it had become a prerequisite for a legitimate candidature, and a cornerstone of a politicians' claim to represent the electors. For Jon Lawrence, meetings had become 'the focal point of elaborate, and sometimes bloody, struggles to establish a party's claim to political legitimacy in a constituency'.[9] Failure to make sufficient speeches, or the abandonment of the platform in the face of heckling or violence, were invariably met with derision and the prospect of electoral damage.

This new platform-centric electoral culture naturally demanded politicians who were skilled orators, and this was reflected by the growth of debating societies, local parliaments, and junior political associations where up-and-coming party men could hone their speaking skills.[10] For the famous contemporary commentator Moisei Ostrogorski, candidates had to be 'fluent and copious, and quick at repartee'.[11] At the end of the century, instructional manuals also began to be published for candidates on what to say at public meetings, and how to say it.[12] This evolution of a new culture of platform oratory was accompanied by a remarkable growth in party organisation, discipline, and professionalism both in the constituencies, and nationally through bodies such as the National Union of Conservative and Constitutional Associations (NUCCA) and the National Liberal Federation

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[6] *The Times*, 23 Oct 1873.

[7] Namely, the Corrupt and Illegal Practices Act of 1883, the Third Reform Act of 1884, and the Redistribution of Seats Act of 1885.

[8] *Eastern Daily Press, 9* Oct 1885; *East Anglian Daily Times*, 19 Nov. 1885.

[9] J. Lawrence, *Speaking for the People: Party, Language, and Popular Politics in England, 1867-1914* (Cambridge, 1998), p.182.

[10] Matthew, 'Rhetoric and Politics', p. 37; J. Davis, 'Working-Class Make-Believe: the South Lambeth Parliament (1887-1890)', *Parliamentary History* (1993), pp.249-58.

[11] M. Ostrogorski, *Democracy and the Organisation of Political Parties*, (1902), vol.1, p. 444.

[12] For example T. Hedderwick, *The Parliamentary Election Manual* (London, 1892), J. Lloyd, *Elections and how to fight them* (London, 1905, 1909),and J. Loader *The Candidate's and election agent's guide; for parliamentary and municipal elections* (London, 1885)

(NLF).[13] In this environment, it was no surprise that politicians often became more image-conscious and deliberate in their approach to the presentation of issues, traditions, personalities, values, and party identity. For Graham Wallas, writing in 1908, projection of 'image' was the main object of a modern party, which he described as 'primarily a name, which, like other names, calls up when it is heard or seen an 'image' that shades imperceptibly into the voluntary realisation of its meaning'.[14] Platform speeches – now placed in a new position of power and influence at the very heart of an increasingly democratic politics – were arguably the single most important contributor to, and influence on, the development and transmission of this image of party to voters, making them a critically important part of the historical record of British politics in the years before the Great War.

II

The Historical Problem

Political speeches have unsurprisingly attracted a great deal of historical interest, especially given the recent influence of the so-called 'linguistic turn'.[15] Historians influenced by the turn have increasingly come to see language as constituting as important an aspect of politics as institutions, individuals, and events, and some have gone further still.[16] Under the general philosophical influence of Ludwig Wittgenstein, Johann Georg Harmann, and Wilhelm Von Humboldt in the 1960s and the post-structuralism of Michel Foucault, Jacques Derrida, Hayden White (and others) in the 1970s, historians of nineteenth and twentieth century British politics have become increasingly interested in the

[13] The historiography on electioneering developments in the late nineteenth century is vast but see for example P. Marsh, *The Discipline of Popular Government: Lord Salisbury's Domestic Statecraft 1881-1902* (Hassocks, 1978); H. Hanham, *Elections and party management: Politics in the time of Disraeli and Gladstone* (Hassocks, 1959); P. Lynch, *The Liberal Party in rural England 1885-1910: radicalism and community* (Oxford, 2003), pp.51-88; A. Windscheffel, *Popular Conservatism in Imperial London, 1868-1906* (2007), pp.84-107; M. Pugh, *The Making of Modern British politics 1867-1939* (Oxford, 1982); L. Blaxill, 'Electioneering, the Third Reform Act, and Political Change in the 1880s', Parliamentary History (2011), pp.343-73; B. McGill, 'Francis Schnadhorst and Liberal Party organization', *Journal of Modern History* (1962); K. Rix, 'Party Agents and English Electoral Culture 1880-1906' (PhD, Cambridge, 2001); K. Swaddle, 'Coping with a mass electorate: A study in the evolution of constituency electioneering in Britain, with a special emphasis on the periods which followed the Reform Acts of 1884 and 1918' (DPhil, Oxford, 1990).

[14] G. Wallas, *Human Nature in Politics* (London, 1908), pp.83-4.

[15] For recent debate, see Lawrence, *Speaking for the People*; J. Epstein, *In Practice: Studies in the Language and Culture of Popular Politics in Modern Britain* (Stanford, 2003), pp. 34-56; M. Bentley, 'Victorian Politics and the Linguistic Turn', *Historical Journal* (1999), pp. 883-902; M. Bentley (ed.), *Companion to Historiography* (2nd edn., 2002), pp. 489-90; P. Readman, 'The State of Twentieth-Century British Political History', *Journal of Policy History* (2009), pp. 231-2; P. Mandler, 'The Problem with Cultural History', *Cultural and Social History* (2004), pp.94-115; C. Hesse, 'The New Empiricism', "The New Empiricism", *Cultural and Social History* (2004), pp.201-207; P. Mandler, 'Problems in Cultural History: A Reply', *Cultural and Social History* (2004), pp.326-32.

[16] See especially J. Vernon, 'Who's afraid of the "linguistic turn"?: the politics of social history and its discontents', *Social History*, 19 (1994); *Politics and the People: a study in English Political culture, c.1815-1867* (Cambridge, 1993); P. Joyce, *Visions of the People: Industrial England and the Question of Class, 1840-1914* (Cambridge, 1991).

relationship between word and deed: what J.L. Austin called 'speech acts'.[17] More broadly, they have come to focus on the subtleties of discourse: particularly the ways in which language affected all aspects of politics from popular party image and presentation, to the development and reinvention of ideologies, heroes, and traditions.[18] Indeed, social and cultural historians of various stripes have also developed a more general interest in 'word history'; namely, in understanding and contextualising the shifting employment, cultural meaning, and power of words, terms, and concepts over time. Indeed, much of the most notable work in this field has focussed on contested political lexicon, such as the terms 'commonwealth', 'democracy', and 'the people'.[19]

The linguistic turn has called old approaches into question. It initially added force to the assault on teleological models such as Marxist or Whig History, where developments in political ideas, institutions, and behaviour represented the necessary and inevitable unfolding of inner human truth, rather than parts of an unstable reality which could be redefined and ultimately transformed through something as ephemeral and superfluous as language.[20] Histories which explained political change through inexorable deep-seated sociological developments, in particular the rise of class-consciousness, became deeply unfashionable.[21] A second approach which has been criticised are so-called 'high political' histories which sought to explain change through the intense biographical study

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[17] J. Austin, *How to do Things with Words* (Oxford, 1975); Q. Skinner, 'Interpretation and the understanding of speech acts' in *Visions of Politics: Volume 1, Regarding method* (Cambridge, 2002), pp.103-27. See also: J. Searle, 'What is a Speech Act?' and P. Strawson 'Intention and Convention in Speech Acts', in J. Searle (ed.) *The Philosophy of Language* (Oxford, 1972), pp.39-53, 23-38; P. Readman, 'Speeches', in M. Dobson and B. Ziemann (eds.), *Reading primary sources: the interpretation of texts from Nineteenth and Twentieth-Century History* (2009), pp. 210-11.

[18] See for example G. Stedman Jones, *Languages of class: studies in English Working Class History, 1832-1982* (Cambridge, 1983); J. Lawrence and M. Taylor (eds.), *Party, State and Society: Electoral Behaviour in Britain since 1820* (Aldershot, 1997); Lynch, *Liberal Party*; Windscheffel, *Popular Conservatism*; M. Roberts, '"Villa toryism" and popular conservatism in Leeds, 1885-1902', *Historical Journal* (2006); D. Tanner, *Political change and the Labour Party, 1900-1918* (Cambridge, 1990); Lawrence, *Speaking for the people.*

[19] See for example Skinner, *Visions of Politics*; R. Koselleck, 'Linguistic Change in the History of Events', The *Journal of Modern History* (1989), pp.649-66; 'Social History and Conceptual History', *Politics, Culture, and Society* (1989), pp.308-25; R. Williams, *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* (New York, 1976); F. Dupuis-Deri, 'The Political Power of Words: The Birth of Pro-democratic Discourse in the Nineteenth Century in the United States and France', *Political Studies* (2004), pp.118-34; Early Modern Research Group, 'Commonwealth: The Social, Cultural, and Conceptual Contexts of an Early Modern Keyword', *Historical Journal*, (2011), pp.659-87; Z.G. Szucs, 'What does 'People' Mean?', in M. Szabo (ed.) *On Politics: Rhetoric, Discourse and Concepts* (Budapest, 2006), pp.5-17.

[20] J. Lawrence, 'Political History', in S. Berger, H. Feldner, K. Passmore (eds.), *Writing History: Theory & Practice* (2003), pp.183-4.

[21] See especially J. Cornford, 'The transformation of Conservatism in the late 19th century', *Victorian Studies* (1963); P. Clarke, *Lancashire and the New Liberalism* (Cambridge, 1971); P. Clarke, 'Electoral sociology of modern Britain', *History* (1972); H. Pelling, *Social geography of British elections, 1885-1910* (1967); Hanham, *Elections and party Management*; T. Nossiter, *Influence, opinion and political idioms in reformed England: case studies from the north-east, 1832-74* (Brighton, 1975); J. Vincent, *The formation of the British Liberal Party, 1857-1868*, (2nd edn., Hassocks, 1976). It is worth pointing out, however, that there is perhaps not as much deeply sociological history as is often been assumed by scholars keen to stress the 'revisionist' character of their work. See Lawrence, 'Political History', pp. 192-3.

of what key political figures did, and their behind-the-scenes manoeuvring, rather than what they said.[22] These works have been criticised – perhaps sometimes unfairly given their interest in ideas and doctrine – as being concerned only with an enclosed 'elite' world of politics hidden in letters, memorandums, and party correspondence, and of largely ignoring the role played by language, especially in the fields of elections, popular politics, and extra-parliamentary oratory.[23] More generally, the philosophical influence of the *Begriffsgeschichte* 'Concept History' most associated with Reinhart Koselleck, and the etymological work of scholars such as Raymond Williams, served to problematise political histories with broad explanatory ambition, but which were relatively unconcerned with unpacking and scrutinising ephemeral terminology, concepts, and ideologies.[24]

The modern approach to studying Political History, having absorbed the force of the linguistic turn, can fairly be described as revisionist, featuring a new interest in culture and discourse, and sensitivity to the fragile and contextual nature of meaning. Perhaps the first major work to be influenced by the turn was Gareth Stedman Jones' landmark *Languages of Class*, although the extent of his commitment to post-structualism remained somewhat unclear.[25] In the early 1990s, more avowedly postmodernist accounts – notably those of James Vernon and Patrick Joyce – begun to appear, but it was only later in the decade that a school of revisionist Political History began to emerge as a new scholarly movement. Led especially by Jon Lawrence and Miles Taylor, this revisionism has undoubtedly been an important inspiration for a number of recent studies of nineteenth and twentieth century politics which eschew structural or theoretical explanations, and instead concentrate on deep readings and reconstructions of the political discourses of individual localities or hitherto little-known politicians.[26]

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[22] This approach is particularly associated with Maurice Cowling and the so-called Peterhouse School. For further methodological commentary on the School, see D. Craig, "High Politics' and the 'New Political History", *Historical Journal* (2010), pp. 453-75.

[23] Readman, 'The State of Twentieth-Century British Political History', pp.231-2. For an example of high-political historians' interest in doctrine and ideas, see esp. M. Bentley, (ed.), *Public and Private Doctrine: Essays in British History presented to Maurice Cowling* (Cambridge, 1993).

[24] Koselleck, 'Linguistic Change in the History of Events'; 'Social History and Conceptual History'; Williams, *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society*.

[25] Stedman Jones, *Languages of Class*, pp.1-24.

[26] For example, see K. Musolf, *From Plymouth to Parliament: a Rhetorical History of Nancy Astor's 1919 campaign* (Basingstoke, 1999); C. MacDonald, 'Locality, Tradition and Language in the Evolution of Scottish Unionism: A Case Study, Paisley, 1886-1910', in C. MacDonald (ed.) *Unionist Scotland, 1800-1997* (Edinburgh, 1998), pp. 52-72; M. Roberts, 'Constructing a Tory world-view: popular politics and the Conservative Press in late-Victorian Leeds', *Historical Research* (2006) and 'W.L. Jackson, exemplary manliness and late Victorian popular Conservatism', in M. McCormack (ed.), *Public Men: Masculinity and Politics in Modern Britain* (Basingstoke, 2007), pp.123-42. Lynch, *Liberal Party*, focuses on just three constituencies (Holmfirth, South Oxfordshire, and North Essex), and J. Moore, *The Transformation of Urban Liberalism: Party Politics and Urban Governance in Late Nineteenth-Century England* (Aldershot, 2006) focuses on Leicester and Manchester. Windscheffel, *Popular Conservatism*, also contains case studies of Henry Morton Stanley (pp.165-75) and Mancherjee Merwanjee Bhownaggree and Dadabhai Naoroji (pp.175-181).

This revisionist approach has considerably deepened historians' appreciation of political culture, and has caused us to take seriously issues such as locality and gender. Above all, it has made us sensitive to the linguistic aspects of the world of politics. While this dissertation must acknowledge its debt to this revisionism, we must not lose sight of its self-imposed limitations: namely that the emphasis on deep readings of texts has made it difficult and indeed undesirable to generalize, and has thus moved History decisively towards the recovery of narrative and away from the supply of explanation. This has naturally provoked a good deal of criticism. In 1992, Lawrence Stone, in his famous exchange with Patrick Joyce in *Past and Present*, warned that the force of the post-modernist assault on the existence of a historiographically recoverable reality, and the reduction of the past purely to a text would 'block off explanations of change over time based on...interactions of material conditions, culture, ideology, and power.'[27] In 2000, Adrian Jones lamented that 'History as a form of rhetoric is ascendant nowadays...[its]...new Foucauldian (discursive) and Geertzian (ethnographic) forms shape its methods, subjects, and sources alike. Discourses and tropes, dramas and "thick" descriptions are all the rage'. For Jones, this led to a History which 'disdained analyses of context and process, privileging studies of particularised webs of place, culture, and discourse instead'.[28]

It is important to qualify the alarm of these historians by pointing out that few historians have pushed the linguistic turn as far as scholars such as Vernon or Joyce. However, it is difficult to dispute the profound and widespread effect that the turn has had on historians, even if they often do not explicitly acknowledge it.[29] Studies are now careful to pay attention to language and, above all, tend to prioritize depth of reading above breadth of causal explanation. Indeed Jon Lawrence himself, writing in 2003, has acknowledged that while some of the 'new political histories' influenced by the linguistic turn – such as Karen Musolf's 'rhetorical History' of Nancy Astor, Catriona MacDonald's reading of 'cultural discourse' in Paisley, or Matthew Roberts' 'recreation' of a 'constructed Tory world-view' in Leeds – might represent 'fascinating, almost anthropological, reconstruction[s] of...political culture', they are also 'defiantly indifferent to any broader claims of historical explanation'. Lawrence notes the general 'dramatic scaling-down of the explanatory ambition of Political History in recent years and the headlong flight from ideas of 'causation' suggesting that he believes that the turn has now occasionally gone too far.[30] In 2009, Paul Readman also warned that the interest in language – while generally beneficial – has led to studies where 'agency and causation have been eschewed in favour of the recovery and analysis of political cultures and discourses'.[31] Musolf's study of Nancy Astor, for

[27] L. Stone, 'History and Post-Modernism III', *Past and Present* (1992), p.191,193.

[28] A. Jones, 'Word and Deed: Why a post-postructural History is needed, and how it might look', *Historical Journal* (2000), p.531, 534. For further criticism of the impact of poststructuralism, see G. R. Elton, *Return to Essentials: some Reflections on the Present State of Historical Study* (Cambridge, 1991); K. Windschuttle, *The Killing of History: how literary critics and social theorists are murdering our past* (London, 1997); R. Evans, *In Defence of History* (3rd edn., 2004).

[29] Bentley, *Companion to Historiography*, pp. 489-90; Readman, 'The State of Twentieth-Century British Political History', pp. 231-2.

[30] Lawrence, 'Political History', p.194.

[31] Readman, 'Speeches', p.216.

example, argues for a purely rhetorical 'microhistory' which – in her words – '[does] not sacrifice knowledge of individual elements to wider generalization, but in fact accentuates individual lives and events'.[32] Other local studies of language such as Lynch's rural England, Windscheffel's London, and indeed Lawrence's Wolverhampton are not as radical, but are generally reluctant to provide broad explanations of causation which stretch beyond their geographically and chronologically focused case studies. Indeed, even the recent broad investigation into the keyword 'Commonwealth' in the early-modern period had a great deal more to say about the multifarious and often unique usages, forms, metaphors, and imagery which formed various cultural experiences of the term, and rather less on how it might factor into broad explanations of historical change.[33]

The situation in British Political History now that the linguistic turn has been fully sustained, is therefore hardly satisfactory. We have gained much, but the old aspiration to provide models, theories, and explanations has been scaled back too far, not just in Political History, but in Social and Cultural History as well.[34] A number of historians have thus called for a reintegration of the explanatory ambition of the old social-scientific methods of the Annales school with the new interest in language – what Jones has rather inelegantly christened a 'post-poststructuralist History' – where measurement of power, scope, typicality and context somehow supplement deep discursive and ethnographic readings.[35] These appeals are not new: even in 1992, Lawrence Stone noted that common ground was beginning to emerge between 'traditional' historians such as himself and the moderate wing of the new linguistic revisionism as represented by scholars such as Stanley Fish and Geoffrey Hartman – ground that might one day permit this kind of eclectic, integrated approach.[36] But given such appeals are still being made today – in Political History and beyond – it is clear that this much wished-for reintegration has not yet materialized.

Why, then, have political historians struggled to answer these calls, and fuse the demands of the linguistic turn with the broader explanatory ambition of old? Let us for a moment consider the major suggestions that have been made so far. Lawrence has proposed studying the interconnections between spheres of political life: between elite and popular politics and between perceptions of power and the mechanisms through which power was wielded. A starting point, he suggests, might be to analyse instances where the worlds of language and electioneering, and elite and popular politics were routinely brought together, such as at public meetings.[37] Indeed, Kathryn Rix has forwarded a similar prescription: proposing the study of the interconnections between local and national political cultures by investigating the relationship of the MP with his or her local party and constituents, and with affairs

[32] Musolf, *From Plymouth to Parliament*, p.xi.

[33] Early Modern Research Group, 'Commonwealth', pp.686-7

[34] Mandler, 'The Problem with Cultural History', pp.96-7; 'The Problem with Cultural History: a Reply', pp.331-2.

[35] Jones, 'Word and Deed', pp.539-41; Mandler, 'The Problem with Cultural History', pp. 113-117; Lawrence, 'Political History', pp.194-9; Epstein, *In Practice*, pp.55-6; Readman, 'Speeches', pp.216-8, 222.

[36] Stone, 'History and Post-Modernism III', p.193.

[37] Lawrence, 'Political History', pp.194-6.

at Westminster.[38] Readman advocates attempting to understand speech acts in terms of their overall illocutionary force: in other words, to ask ourselves what speakers intended to achieve by saying what they said. [39] For Readman, a purely linguistic reading of a speech must therefore be contextualized with biographical analysis to shed light on a speaker's intentions at the time he spoke, and might usefully be accompanied by insights into how his words was received by contemporaries. An understanding of intention and reception will, as Quentin Skinner and Koselleck have also argued, help us better establish a speech's contextual impact and consequent influence: what Peter Mandler has called 'the throw' of discourse.[40]

These prescriptions are laudable. However, it could be argued that they also place a high burden on future scholars of political language. To study the interconnections between politics, he or she must essentially study two complex and independent spheres simultaneously, and it may prove difficult to co-locate source material from both realms to bridge the gap satisfactorily. To develop a diachronic as well as synchronic frame, as Lawrence calls for, would also seemingly require either the examination of a great deal more evidence or some sacrifice in the depth of a reading of a text to achieve this greater breadth. Similarly, to properly understand the intentions of a speaker and the contemporary response to his words, requires a chronologically-precise study of biography which may be almost impossible if he is not a substantial figure who looms large in the historical record. In each case, historians' prescriptions for adding explanatory power to the study of language lies in the supply of further chronological, biographical, or thematic contextualisation which – even assuming the source material is wide enough to enable it – will make this new reintegrated Political History both challenging and time-consuming to write.

III

The Purpose of this Dissertation

This dissertation does not claim to have a satisfactory answer to the challenge of reintegration, but wishes to submit a methodological proposal which could augment studies of political language with a considerable degree of auxiliary context. I propose a measured and eclectic importation of quantitative language analysis techniques from the social sciences: in particular from the emerging discipline of Corpus Linguistics. In this field, huge collections of texts (known as 'corpora') are interrogated with computerized text-retrieval techniques with the aim of answering linguistic research questions, principally by electronically counting the occurrence of words and establishing common patterns

[38] Rix, 'Party Agents', pp.292-3.

[39] Readman, 'Speeches', pp.216-22. See also the arguments of Austin, *How to do things with words*, p.98, 116; Searle, 'What is a Speech Act?', pp.46-9; Skinner, *Visions of Politics*, pp.103-5, 122-7.

[40] Mandler, 'The Problem with Cultural History', p.96.

between them.[41] The value of these quantitative language analysis techniques has been well-demonstrated in other humanities subjects, and in Political Science.[42] Historians, however, have very seldom used them.[43]

What makes a corpus such a potentially powerful tool is its ability to augment linguistic hypotheses – developed through reading speeches – with the capacity to measure. At the click of a button, a scholar can generate data which can gauge the typicality, significance, and 'throw' of selected key words, phrases, and semantic relationships across hundreds of speakers, localities, and across decades. An example might be an Ipswich Liberal candidate's references to Irish Home Rule in the general election of 1892. After gaining a nuanced understanding of his vocabulary by reading his speeches, a well-constructed corpus enables a historian to measure how often other Liberals in the county or region used similar vocabulary, and how this compared with equivalent local Conservatives, national cabinet and shadow-cabinet level speakers, and in previous or subsequent general elections. An equivalent analysis done manually would take a researcher weeks, if not months. Using this combined approach of deep readings and selective quantification, it is also theoretically possible to measure long-term trends in party language: such as (for example) whether religious vocabulary declined in the 1880-1914 period, whether Conservatives really championed Imperialism more than the Liberals, and to assess the relative impact of leaders and heroes such as Gladstone and Disraeli.

Not all political language texts are amenable to study through corpus-driven quantification. Length is important, because numerical patterns observed in a short text are more likely to have occurred due to random variation, and are less likely to reliably indicate noteworthy trends. Still more important is the availability of other suitable corpora for the purpose of comparison, as simply mapping a speaker's or writer's vocabulary in isolation is of limited use unless the historian's quarry is

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[41] There are a large number of introductory texts available, often aimed at scholars from other disciplines looking to explore the possibilities of corpora. These include the classic J. Sinclair, *Corpus, Concordance, Collocation* (Oxford, 1991); T. McEnery and A. Wilson, *Corpus Linguistics: an introduction* (1998); S. Adolphs, *Introducing Electronic Text Analysis: A Practical Guide for Language and Literary Students* (Trowbridge, 2006); G. Kennedy, *An Introduction to Corpus Linguistics* (1998).

[42] Recent examples include R. Hart, *Campaign Talk: why elections are good for us* (Princeton, 2000) and *Political Keywords: using language that uses us* (Oxford, 2005); G. Cook, *Genetically Modified Language: the discourse of argument for GM crops and food* (Abingdon, 2004); W. Teubert, 'Keywords in Eurosceptic discourse in Britain' in A. Musolff, C. Good, P. Points and R. Wittlinger (eds.), *Attitudes towards Europe: language in the unification process* (Aldershot, 2001); D. Orpin, 'Corpus Linguistics and Critical Discourse Analysis: Examining the ideology of sleaze', *International Journal of Corpus Linguistics* (2005); N. Fairclough, *New Labour, new language?* (2000); R. De Beaugrande, 'Discourse studies and ideology: On 'liberalism' and 'liberalisation' in three large corpora of English', *Discourse Studies* (1999). See also the recently published collection D. Archer (ed.), *What's in a Word-list? Investigating word frequency and keyword extraction* (Bodmin, 2009).

[43] For an overview of quantification in History, and in particular the emerging criticisms of its viability and potential in the 1980s, see T. Rabb, 'The Development of Quantification in Historical Research', *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* (1983). The famous loss of faith in quantification by Lawrence Stone (one of its former leading lights) is also essential reading: see L. Stone 'The Revival of Narrative: Reflections on a new old History', *Past and Present*, 25 (1979).

a text important enough to be analysed in a vacuum, such as Hitler's speeches at the Nuremburg rallies or the contents of *The Communist Manifesto*. But ultimately, if a historian is trying to gauge the typical as well as explain the exceptional, then situating his or her findings in the broader context of contemporary discourse is a critical step towards ultimately understanding them. In this respect, corpora might be very useful because they facilitate easy numerical comparison and contextualisation. This is not to suggest that an isolated speech or text does not matter on its own, but, just as a dot of colour on a blank canvas will go on to comprise a tiny part of a painting, so a single election speech is part of a broader text of party and politics. It is not much on its own, but when taken alongside a wide sample of hundreds of others, carefully selected to ensure representative samples, and analysed through comparisons, it can establish a strong claim to illustrate typicality, just as an opinion poll of a thousand people can accurately claim to represent the views of an entire nation (within a given margin of error, typically plus or minus three percentage points).[44]

The dissertation that follows is essentially a methodological experiment. It aims to develop a corpus-based approach to the analysis of British election speeches, and employ this method to reassess a large number of the key debates on party language that loom largest in the historiography of the 1880-1914 period. The dissertation features two purpose-built corpora: for a case-study region (East Anglia) and for national figures. Both consist of more than a million words of platform speeches digitised from the press, subdivided by party, election year, and locality. They are used to perform in-depth studies of the linguistic impact of the Third Reform Act, the Unauthorized Programme, Home Rule, Liberal Unionism, Imperialism, Liberal Faddism, Tariff Reform, and the New Liberalism. While these investigations are designed to be judged on their own merits, their main aim – taken together – is to ask how and how far a corpus-based methodology might strengthen our approach to studying election speeches, and – as a more tentative corollary – political language in History more generally.[45] In this respect, this dissertation argues that corpora – if used carefully – can be as useful to historians studying the speeches of past politicians as they are already to political scientists studying the speeches of their modern successors, and that current historical orthodoxy – which almost entirely rejects the quantitative analysis of language – is far too timid.

This argument and the methods this dissertation uses are undoubtedly controversial. Many objections can be made against them, as well as other attempts to introduce supposedly objective quantification into the study of history.[46] However, despite this dissertation's advocacy of quantitative

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[44] J. Greer, *Public Opinion and Polling Around the World* (Santa Barbara, 2003), vol 1., p. 456.

[45] Although this discussion is new to British Political History, it is by no means unknown to the discipline in general, although it has achieved little prominence. See G. Welling, 'Can computers help us read History better? Computerised text analysis on four editions of the outline of American History', *History & Computing* (2001); D. Greenstein, *A Historian's Guide to Computing* (Oxford, 1994), pp.158-99; E. Mawdsley and T. Munck, *Computing for Historians: an Introductory Guide* (Manchester, 1993), pp.27-43.

[46] See for example Stone, 'The Revival of the Narrative'; N. Fitch, 'Statistical Fantasies and Historical Facts: History in Crisis and its Methodological Implications', *Historical Methods* (1984); A. Schlesinger, Jr., 'The Humanist Looks at Empirical Social Research', *American Sociological Review* (1962); G. Himmerlfarb (ed.), *The New History and the Old* (Cambridge,

language analysis, it is not designed to be a sales pitch for numerical empiricism. My argument is not that we should replace the close reading of political speeches with number-crunching, but that we should carefully use corpora alongside traditional methods. In asking ourselves what we might gain through quantification, we are well-placed to remind ourselves what is better left to traditional forensic qualitative interpretation. Ideally, a middle path can be found between a nuanced humanistic reading and a more purely linguistic, empirical, scientific one. An exclusively computerized corpus-driven approach to the study of language can all too easily turn into a glorified statement of the obvious,[47] run arbitrarily categorized evidence through a machine and present the output as fact,[48] become so complex in its statistical argumentation and evidencing that it is rendered incomprehensible to the vast majority of humanities scholars untrained in statistics or programming,[49] and can diminish the human story at the heart of history.[50] But perhaps a bipartite approach can be developed which retains qualitative nuance and sensitivity to detail in its microanalysis of topics, argumentative techniques, and turns of phrase, but which also regularly steps back from the minutiae and uses aggregate statistical techniques to survey the panorama of the whole body of language. It can sort the typical from the atypical, test potentially flawed scholarly intuition with cold statistical data, and articulate presumptions and evidence with the naked specificity that numbers demand. The two approaches will not always be complementary. An intuitive assumption about the nature of language might be contradicted by a corpus reading, and, equally, the sensitive reading of a text might show that a seldom-used word or phrase which barely registered in word frequency lists was nevertheless of considerable significance when read and understood in the text. The potential friction between the two methods of interpretation might allow us to be more sure of what we say and (perhaps more importantly) how loudly we say it. This dissertation seeks to implement this bipartite approach, and to balance the supply of qualitative and quantitative evidence.

1987); G. Elton, 'Two Kinds of History' in R. Fogel and G. Elton, *Which Road to the Past: two views of History* (New Haven, 1983), pp.73-121; T Hamerow, 'The Bureaucratization of History', *The American Historical Review* (1989); C. Ball, 'Automated Text Analysis: Cautionary Tales' in *Literary and Linguistic Computing* (1994).

[47] Mawdsley and Munck, *Computing for Historians*, p.7.

[48] Sinclair, *Corpus, Concordance, Collocation*, p. 42; Fitch, 'Statistical Fantasies', p.242.

[49] E. Johnson, 'Reflections on an Old "New History": Quantitative Social Science History in Postmodern Middle Age', *Central European History* (1989), pp. 408-26, 414; W. Runciman, 'Thinking by Numbers 1: on the use of Statistics in Sociology, their virtues and their limitations', *The Times Literary Supplement*, (6 August 1971), p. 943; Fitch, 'Statistical Fantasies', p.245.

[50] L. Stone, 'The Revival of Narrative'; Fitch, 'Statistical Fantasies', p.249; J. Meisel, 'Words by the Numbers: a Quantitative Analysis and Comparison of the Oratorical Careers of William Ewart Gladstone and Winston Spencer Churchill', *Historical Research* (2002), p.295.

IV

Content, Context, and Chronology

This dissertation spans the thirty years (and nine general elections) between 1880 and the Great War, a period which E.H.H. Green has described as 'an age of transition'.[51] The writer Ernest Edward Kellett put it more strongly: he recalled in 1936 that 'I have seen no such rapid or complete change as that which took place in the eighties and nineties...it is like one of those catastrophes which the geologist used to postulate in order to explain the alterations in the earth: sudden, immense, and, I think, irrevocable'.[52] While Kellett was referring to the influence of Darwinist thought, his words were also an apt description of the more general transformations affecting Britain in this period: the rapidly growing franchise (which increased by 154% between 1880 and 1910),[53] the acceleration of industrial and commercial change, the advance of technology and science, and the vast expansion of imperial territory. This eventful age forms the contextual backdrop to this dissertation. The platform – at its historical zenith – was one of the principal discursive forums in which contemporaries debated, deliberated, and ultimately made sense of these changes, and what should be done about them. In the space available, then, the years 1880-1910 seemed the most appropriate timeframe. While the dissertation could have begun in 1868 if it was a borough study, the decision to include both rural and urban constituencies in a regional investigation (see below) renders the pre-1885 period somewhat problematic. The 1920s and 1930s, while fascinating, would have coincided with the decline in the pre-eminence of platform oratory, and thus diminished the source-base required to build large corpora.[54]

This dissertation is primarily concerned with platform speeches in the constituencies, and takes the view that these electoral struggles – often featuring little-known politicians and seldom-studied localities – present a uniquely useful focus for historians seeking to understand the relationship between politicians and people. This is not to say that other speeches – such as by MPs in the House of Commons, or set-piece extra-Parliamentary orations by frontbench spokesmen – were unimportant, but that the relationship between parties and people can be most fully understood by focussing primarily on the grassroots platform. This was the rhetorical arena where rival candidates wishing to represent, and electors wishing to be represented, were routinely brought together as mutual political stakeholders. In this respect, this dissertation is directly inspired by the linguistic turn and the 'new Political History' and must acknowledge its debt to the recent local studies of Lawrence, Windscheffel, Lynch, Roberts, MacDonald, and others.

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[51] E. Green, *An Age of Transition: British Politics 1880-1914* (Edinburgh, 1997).

[52] Cited in D. Newsome, *The Victorian world picture: perceptions and introspections in an age of change* (London, 1997), p.8.

[53] Figure compiled from F. Craig, *British electoral facts 1832-1980* (Chichester, 1981), pp.80-1.

[54] The decline of the public meeting after the Great War is explored in depth in J. Lawrence, 'The Transformation of British Public Politics after the First World War', *Past & Present*, (2006), pp.185-216.

Though a local basis is desirable, this dissertation's corpus-driven methodology necessarily also requires breadth. A single constituency would not contain enough speeches to create a large corpus, and such a narrow study would struggle to make broader historical or methodological claims. To solve this problem, I have chosen to focus on a particular case-study region: the sixteen constituencies of East Anglia (defined as Norfolk and Suffolk).[55] A regional investigation retains the important emphasis on locality, but also gives the dissertation a significantly broader focus and range of constituencies to study: an approach employed successfully in Windscheffel's examination of London Conservatism.[56] Although I could have (equally) chosen other localities with a strong regional identity (such as Lancastria), East Anglia was selected because it offers the best opportunity to expand historiographical coverage. Norfolk and Suffolk have attracted only scant attention in this period,[57] and the region is composed almost entirely of the two constituency types which historians have most neglected: rural divisions and provincial towns.[58] East Anglia was also hotly contested between Conservatives and Liberals: unopposed returns were rare, and only two of the sixteen constituencies

[55] Definitions of East Anglia as a region vary, but for the purposes of this study, I have chosen to limit it to Norfolk and Suffolk for the sake of manageability. A more generous definition might have included Cambridgeshire, and even North Essex and North Huntingdonshire. In Norfolk and Suffolk, the borough seats between 1885 and 1910 were: Bury St. Edmunds, Ipswich (two seats), King's Lynn, Norwich (two seats), and Yarmouth. The counties were Eye, Lowestoft, Stowmarket, Sudbury, Woodbridge, and Norfolk East, Mid, South, South-West, North, and North-West. In 1880 before redistribution, the electoral map naturally looked quite different. The boroughs were Ipswich, Norwich, King's Lynn, Bury St. Edmunds, and Eye. The counties were Suffolk Eastern and Western, and Norfolk Western, Northern, and Southern. Each returned two members, except for Eye, which returned one.

[56] Windscheffel, *Popular Conservatism*, pp.32-83, 163-205,

[57] The only studies which focus principally on East Anglia are L. Blaxill, 'Corrupt Practice and the General Election of 1885 in Ipswich', *Suffolk Review* (2006), pp.35-42 and 'Electioneering, the Third Reform Act, and Political Change'; P. Clarke and K. Langford, 'Hodge's Politics: The Agricultural Labourers and the Third Reform Act in Suffolk' in N. Harte and R. Quinault (eds.) *Land and Society in Britain 1700-1914* (Manchester, 1996). Lynch, *Liberal Party*, does cover the Saffron Waldon division of Essex, but this is only on the fringes of the region, and by many judgments is not in East Anglia at all. A. Howkins, *Poor Labouring Men: Rural Radicalism in Norfolk, 1872-1923* (London, 1985) focuses principally on agricultural trade unionism, and contains little electoral politics, and B. Doyle, 'Urban Liberalism and the "lost generation": politics and middle class culture in Norwich, 1900-1935', *Historical Journal* (1995) prioritises municipal above parliamentary contests.

[58] The majority of existing studies concern urban areas. These include Windscheffel, *Popular Conservatism;* Lawrence, *Speaking for the People*, pp.73-128; Roberts, 'Villa Toryism' and 'Constructing a Tory World View'; Clarke, *Lancashire*; M. Brodie, *The Politics of the Poor: the East End of London, 1885–1914* (Oxford, 2004); I. Sharpe, 'Empire, Patriotism and the Working-Class Electorate: The 1900 General Election in the Battersea Constituency', *Parliamentary History*, (2009); C. Macdonald, *The Radical Thread: Political Change in Scotland. Paisley politics, 1885-1924* (East Linton, 2000); G. L. Bernstein, 'Liberalism and the Progressive Alliance in the constituencies, 1900-1914: three case studies', *Historical Journal*, (1983). Studies which focus mainly on the countryside and provincial towns are scarce, but include Lynch, *Liberal Party*; Blaxill, 'Electioneering, the Third Reform Act, and Political Change'; and J. Howarth, 'The Liberal Revival in Northamptonshire, 1880-1895: A Case Study in late Nineteenth Century Elections', *Historical Journal* (1969), pp.78-118. There is also Clarke and Langford, 'Hodge's Politics'; R. Olney, *Lincolnshire politics, 1832-85* (Oxford, 1973); R. Davis, *Political Change and Continuity, 1760-1885: a Buckinghamshire Study* (Newton Abbot, 1972) and E. Jaggard, 'Political continuity and change in late nineteenth-century Cornwall', *Parliamentary History* (1992), but these mainly cover the earlier period, and finish in 1885.

remained in the possession of one party throughout the whole period. This made it an attractive choice for a study intending to focus equally on both parties. Finally, and perhaps most crucially, the East Anglian political press in this period boasts sufficient breadth and depth to sustain a corpus which is *balanced*: i.e. one which contains exactly equal amounts of speech for each of the nine elections, the sixteen constituencies, and the two parties.[59] It would have been easy, for example, to fall into the trap of compiling an East Anglian corpus which was biased towards times and places where the speeches are easiest to find: for Ipswich and Norwich (where most newspapers were based) or the 1880s and 1890s (when the provincial political press was strongest).[60] This would have resulted in a skewed corpus which – like a skewed opinion poll – would have produced potentially unrepresentative readings.

Despite the regional focus, this dissertation must – like all local studies – acknowledge that the quantitative and qualitative analysis of East Anglian speeches may not reflect the country as a whole. In particular, the region is biased towards agriculture, and lacks larger urban centres with heavy industry which were central to political life in other localities, especially in the north. However, the dissertation does continually try to place East Anglia in a wider national context by the simultaneous analysis of a second parallel corpus of speeches by frontbench cabinet and shadow cabinet level politicians as reported in *The Times* during election campaigns. This corpus takes a back seat to its East Anglian partner, and primarily serves to add greater context through highlighting occasions when patterns in party language on the national and the grassroots moved in tandem, and the occasions when they did not. Finally, the dissertation occasionally refers to a third corpus from Hansard's Parliamentary Debates when a comparison to Westminster politics is useful, and on a handful of occasions refers to other purpose-built corpora to deepen analysis. Such a setup is not perfect, but is designed to balance explanatory ambition with the desire to anchor the dissertation firmly in the narrative of East Anglian electoral politics in these years.

The dissertation's contents – in particular its deliberate focus on the most hotly debated election issues such as Empire, Tariff Reform, and Home Rule – reflect the fact that it is first and foremost a methodological experiment. Rather than seeking to shed light on neglected and little-researched dimensions of the language of electoral politics, the dissertation instead prioritises the reassessment of areas where the academic debate is most intense. This is not to say a corpus-based approach is necessarily poorly suited to the former aim, but recognises – as a proponent of a new and controversial quantitative methodology – that this dissertation's historical claims can be most rigorously and explicitly tested when directly compared against existing qualitative accounts.

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[59] For the East Anglian corpus, each party has a 50,000 word instalment per election. Within the 50,000 words, each contested constituency makes up an equal share, except for Ipswich and Norwich which – as double-member boroughs – contribute double the word-count.

[60] For a commentary on the quantity and quality of political coverage in the press (especially its decline in the mid-1890s) see S. Koss, *The Rise and Fall of the Political Press in Britain: vol.1: The Nineteenth-Century* (1981), pp.411-31.

V

Evidence and Sources

The source base of this dissertation is, rather obviously, overwhelmingly speeches. Occasionally it refers to contemporary periodicals, election manuals, political correspondence, and printed party ephemera from East Anglian archives, but this is invariably in a supporting capacity. In this respect, this dissertation pushes the linguistic turn fairly far. However, it does not subscribe to the literal interpretation of Foucault's famous pronouncement that 'there is nothing outside the text' and is philosophically quite different from the more radically poststructuralist accounts in this field such as those of Vernon, Joyce, and Musolf. This is because this dissertation does not disregard wider context, and is in fact actively preoccupied with it: using quantitative data from millions of words of speech to establish the weight and throw of words, issues, and ideas. It is this same ambition to contextualise that rightly encourages other historians of political language to head for the archive to make detailed auxiliary studies of sociological, psephological, and biographical sources. In this respect, this dissertation is no different: it simply obtains the bulk of its contextual evidence from a different source, namely, quantitative text analysis.

In terms of its interrogation of the speeches, this dissertation makes some claim to empiricism. This is because – as the following chapter will explain – corpora can be automatically compared and interrogated with software.[61] Programs such as *Antconc* highlight particular words which appear more often (for example) in one election compared to another, in the speeches of one party compared to its rival, and in East Anglia compared to the national picture. In each chapter, a thorough empirical quantitative analysis was initially performed of all the relevant subsections of the corpus using reference corpora and word frequency lists, and this was a major influence on the direction of analysis. Equally important was the manual reading of those same subsections in their entirety. However, despite these initial quantitative and qualitative surveys, I naturally approached the sources with some suspicion of what I would find, and how the analysis might corroborate or contradict existing accounts, particularly in areas where historians had made more sweeping generalisations on the content of electoral language, such as – for example – on the centrality of Imperialism to Conservative appeals.

A large number of newspapers were used throughout the period, reflecting the fact that local publications were often short-lived, and vacillated in their commitment to political speech reporting from election to election. There are naturally a number of problems in relying so heavily on newspapers, not least those of partisanship, omission, and (perhaps particularly) the shifting reporting conventions employed throughout the period. These problems, and the ways in which these were mitigated, are fully discussed in the following chapter. The corpora themselves are supplied on the attached CD-ROM, and a full breakdown of their anatomy can be found in Appendix A. A brief and

[61] See 'Reference Corpus' in the Technical Glossary, and below, pp.42-3.

simple user-guide for their interrogation on a PC can also be found on the CD itself, in 'Instructions.pdf'. *Antconc* is also included on the CD.

VI
Dissertation Outline

The dissertation contains five main chapters. *Chapter One* is entirely methodological, and discusses the general use of corpora for the study of political speeches, exploring their strengths and weaknesses as aides to historians of language, and why they have so far found little favour as a historical methodology. The chapter then moves to a more specific discussion of the anatomy of this dissertation's corpora, and how they are used to perform quantitative analysis. Finally, it also offers a defence against the most powerful criticisms of the methodology.

The remaining four chapters are historical: each focuses on 2-3 general elections and the debates which surround them, although they continually discuss findings in the context of the 1880-1914 period in general. *Chapter Two* compares 1880 to 1885 to investigate the impact of the 1883-85 reforms on language. It argues that historians have underestimated the impact of the enfranchisement of the agricultural labourer, who – far from being ignored by parties – immediately replaced the farmer as the main target of electoral appeals. The pre-eminence of the labourers helped push Joseph Chamberlain's Unauthorized Programme to the fore, and gave it a much wider reach than historians (and seemingly Chamberlain himself) have contended.

Chapter Three focuses principally on 1886 and 1892, and deals with one of the most hotly debated issues in this era: Irish Home Rule. It argues that historians have often overplayed the importance of Ireland, and demonstrates that it was central only in 1886 and 1892, rather than throughout the period. It lends support to the traditional interpretation that Home Rule yielded little political advantage to Liberals but a great deal to Unionists, and suggests that even Gladstone – at his most dominant in these years – may have been a more valuable rhetorical resource to the latter than the former. It also deals with the impact of Liberal Unionism, and seeks to qualify recent scholarship that stresses their distinct party identity by demonstrating that, while Liberal Unionists may have regarded *themselves* as distinct, that the two main parties – who controlled the vast majority of platforms – were not so charitable.

Chapter Four moves onto 1895 and 1900 to investigate the impact of Imperialism. Its central contention is that historians have exaggerated the centrality of the Empire to Conservative language, and finds that it was only dominant in 1900, not in 1895 (as often suggested) or previously. Moreover, it argues that historians' preoccupation with the 'contested' nature of Imperialism and patriotism has caused them to be unhelpfully vague on the difference between them, and which party exploited them better. In this respect, it argues that in 1900, the Empire was squarely a Conservative rhetorical resource, and the Liberal alternative of 'sane Imperialism' was too intellectual and counter-intuitive to match it. Continuing this theme, the chapter also examines the Liberal faddism of the 1890s, especially

the preoccupation with insobriety, Church of England privilege, and jingoism. It argues that the faddists were united by an attack on irrationality: that an electorate intoxicated by drink, hypnotised by military spirit, and brainwashed by Church monopoly would not realise their rationality and vote Liberal. While this view credits Liberalism in the 1890s with more coherency than it is generally accorded, it also perhaps showcases the weakness of overly intellectual and esoteric appeals when pitted against the simple partisan counters of the Unionists.

Chapter Five moves into the Edwardian period, and deals with 1906 and both elections of 1910. Its main focus is how and how far the New Liberalism manifested itself on the platform. It argues that, while the Liberals did emphasise social reform considerably more often than they had in the past (and more often than their opponents), that this was overshadowed by more familiar themes: namely Free Trade and the House of Lords. Moreover, Liberals did not – as has widely been argued – seem to develop a strong class-centric appeal: this dissertation in fact shows that 'class' was more widely mentioned in 1885 and 1895 than in the Edwardian period. The chapter also demonstrates the limitations of the progressive alliance through a case-study of the language of Labour in Norwich and nationally, arguing that the party was developing a distinct appeal in these years which made it a potential threat to Liberalism. Finally, the chapter also deals with Tariff Reform, and contends that, while historians have rightly seen Chamberlain's scheme as a liability in 1906, that we should view the Tariff Reform of 1910 in a quite different light. The fiscal proposals were different, and they were forwarded with enthusiasm and unanimity by candidates, and were less vulnerable to Liberal counters than four years previously. Overall, the chapter is thus inclined to side with historians who stress underlying Liberal weakness by 1910, and it supports an emerging revisionism which places Unionism on the eve of war in a somewhat stronger position than is argued in the influential accounts of E.H.H. Green and Neal Blewett.

The Conclusion takes an overview of the four chronological chapters, and discusses the deeper underlying characteristics of the language of election campaigns in these thirty years, and the rhetorical strategies of the parties who fought them. It argues that the historians have underestimated the ephemerality and elasticity of electoral language, and are insufficiently sensitive to the fact that campaigns were interconnected debates between partisan political combatants, rather than parallel streams of party speeches. This leads the dissertation to contend that electoral language should be regarded as a distinct discourse in itself where issues, ideas, and personalities could play out quite differently from other spheres of politics. The conclusion also discusses the rhetorical strategies of the Liberal and Unionist parties throughout the period, and argues that the Conservatives better adapted to the challenge of mass politics after 1885. Speakers more reliably focussed on key election issues, were more partisan, and manoeuvred themselves into positions where they could exploit the natural rhetorical advantage of opposition above proposition.

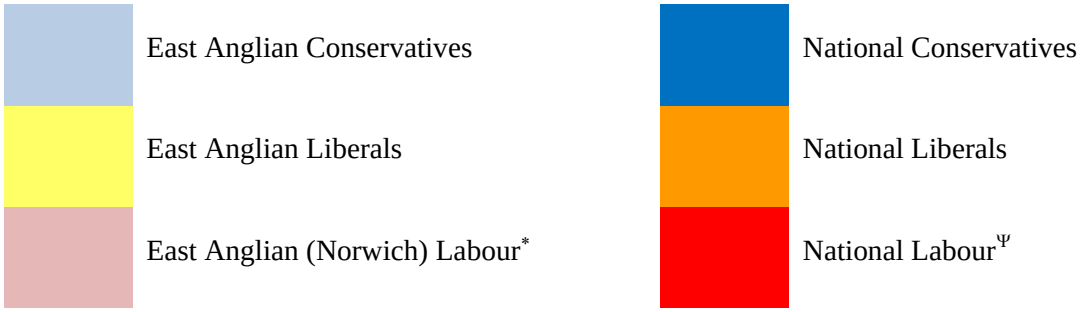
The dissertation is completed by three appendices. Appendix A is technical, and outlines the anatomy of the corpora, and describes how they were interrogated with software. Appendix B is statistical, and contains the supporting data tables for each of the four historical chapters. These tables

use an intuitive numbering system, and are referred to throughout the dissertation. Where visualisation was useful, parts of Appendix B are occasionally reproduced in the main text as tables and graphs. Finally, Appendix C is an exhaustive list of all the East Anglian candidates who fought the region's sixteen constituencies in the nine general elections between 1880 and December 1910.

The dissertation's statistical data is designed to be as accessible and simple as possible. Graphs are basic line and bar charts, and all statistics are simple percentages, ratios, and averages. Unlike many social science studies, this dissertation does not use more complex statistical techniques, avoiding p-values, algebra, and regression analysis. This is partly reflective of the fact that historians are seldom trained in statistics, but is mostly because the dissertation is able to make vast majority of its points powerfully through simple numerical comparisons. In this regard, there is one important rule: all numerical readings (unless specifically indicated) for each corpus subdivision (e.g. East Anglian Liberals in 1892, national Conservatives in 1906) are directly comparable with each other because they are composed of identical word-counts (50,000 words per subdivision).

There are also six house colours used for figures throughout the dissertation for graphs: light blue and light yellow (East Anglian Conservatives and Liberals respectively) and dark blue and dark yellow (national Conservatives and Liberals). In chapter five (which deals with the Edwardian period) the Labour Party also become a factor, and they are assigned light and dark red for East Anglian and national speakers respectively. These are reproduced below. For a fuller guide, see Appendix A. Finally, the dissertation makes regular use of a small number of specialist terms from the field of Corpus Linguistics: these are explained in the Technical Glossary.

Dissertation House Colours



The following two acronyms are also used regularly on graphs and tables throughout the dissertation: '**EA**' for East Anglia and '**NAT**' for National Speakers. '**CON**', '**LIB**', and '**LAB**' are also used for parties.

* Labour fought only one constituency in East Anglia (Norwich), in the elections of 1906, January 1910, and December 1910.

Ψ Labour are (unsurprisingly) only discussed in Chapter Five, which deals with the Edwardian period. A number of special notes apply to both Labour corpora, and these are discussed in pp.186-7 below.

CHAPTER 1

Corpora and the Historical Study of Political Language

This chapter discusses this dissertation's methodology in four sections, and is designed to preface the thesis that follows. The first section considers the general academic background, and traces the relationship between historians and quantification since 1945, and seeks to better understand why corpora have previously found little favour. The second begins to examine the theoretical case for corpora in the analysis of political language. In particular, it assesses to what extent election platform speeches are amenable to this kind of methodology. The third section moves to practice, and asks how and how far our current overwhelmingly qualitative approach might be improved by these techniques. Fourthly and finally, the chapter discusses this dissertation's corpora themselves: their anatomy, how they will be interrogated, and how the quantitative data generated will be interpreted. The chapter also discusses the principal objections which might be made to this dissertation's methodology.

I

Background: Quantification in History since 1945

Humanities scholars – particularly historians – have had an awkward relationship with quantification during the last half-century. Statistical modelling has long been part and parcel of Economic History, but the field has generally developed these techniques (such as cliometrics) in isolation from the mainstream, and is now more often categorised as a Social Science in Britain.[1] There was, however, a period in the 1960s and 1970s when computer-driven quantitative projects became popular (especially in America) and millions of dollars were invested in huge undertakings which promised a new Social History that might delineate dominant patterns in human behaviour through mass-processing demographic statistical data.[2] As Hans Kellner has observed, 'historians were confidently processing larger and larger quantities of information, producing broader comparisons and wider conclusions, and, in general, extending the historical domain toward a goal of "total History"'.[3] An example was the Philadelphia Project, which promised to measure social mobility in America to prove the truth or falsity of the 'American Dream'. A second – on alliance aggregation – tried to taxonomise and tabulate past diplomatic pacts, with the aim of scientifically explaining the preconditions for successful peace settlements. Both took many years, and involved hundreds of researchers. However, neither produced

[1] R. Fogel, 'The Limits of Quantitative Methods in History', *The American Historical Review*, vol.80, No.2 (Apr. 1975), p.334.

[2] R. Harrison. 'The "new social History" in America' in P. Lambert and P. Schofield (eds.), *Making History: an Introduction to the History and Practices of a Discipline* (Abingdon, 2004), p.114.

[3] H. Kellner, 'Narrativity in History: Poststructuralism and since', *History and Theory* (1987), p.1.

any more than enormous yet incomplete piles of punched cards recording thousands of readings from databases into which biographies and historical events – hastily forced into binary categories – had been put.[4]

Even when the projects did generate publishable output, it was not long before they became subject to widespread criticism. Charles Tilly's work on the internal dynamics of social movements (based on statistical categorisation of the social statuses of participants) was attacked for the way its databases pushed people into fixed categories such as 'merchant' or 'artisan' where each classification was in fact highly debateable.[5] Gregor Dallas' project on the adaption of rural household economies in the French Loire Country to nineteenth century industrialisation and modernisation was criticised for its black and white determinism: it declared (for example) that the absence of a causal statistical relationship between profession, servants, and kin necessarily indicated Marshall Sahlin's model of anarchic household economy.[6] Somehow, when armed with a computer, Dallas and his peers seemed to suffer, in the stinging words of Lawrence Stone, from 'atrophy of the critical faculties'.[7] Finally, the methodology of Fogel and Engerman's *Time on the Cross* was actively controversial. By constructing a large database from the records of American slave traders, it used demographic statistical modelling to argue that the human suffering of slaves had been considerably milder than previous scholarship, based mainly on selected testimonies, had suggested.[8] This attracted a great deal of harsh criticism of how the project, regardless of the statistical validity of its claims, had reduced the negro experience of slavery to numbers and graphs, ignoring the unquantifiable but profound psychological damage which could not be tabulated.[9] Critics also claimed that it turned each unique individual and each unique story into a statistic, seemingly dehumanising the past through use of regression analysis and chi-squared equations.[10]

Although quantification always attracted criticism from the traditional historical lobby, the beginning of the great watershed came in 1979 when Stone – one of the leading pioneers of

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[4] S. Hockey, 'The History of Humanities Computing', in S. Schreibman, R. Siemens, and J. Unsworth (eds.), *A Companion to Digital Humanities* (Oxford, 2004), pp.4-10; Fogel, 'The Limits', pp. 412-13; L. Stone, 'The Revival of Narrative: Reflections on a New Old History', *Past & Present*, (1979), pp.12-13; N. Fitch, 'Statistical Fantasies and historical facts. History in crisis and its Methodological Implications', *Historical Methods* (1984), p.242.

[5] L. Tilly and C. Tilly, *Class conflict and collective action* (London, 1981); D. Greenstein, *A Historian's Guide to Computing* (New York, 1994), pp.27-28.

[6] Fitch, 'Statistical Fantasies', p.242.

[7] L. Stone, 'History and the Social Sciences in the Twentieth Century' in *The Past and the Present* (Boston, 1981), p.29.

[8] R. Fogel and S. Engerman, *Time on the Cross: Economics of American Slavery* (Boston, 1974). Fogel and Engerman used quantitative analysis of slaver's records and ship's log-books to argue that slaves were well-fed (i.e. that their diet met or exceeded minimum levels of all the major vitamins), that their life expectancy was considerably higher than previously believed, and that very few slave families were forcibly broken up.

[9] P. David and P. Temin, 'Slavery: The Progressive Institution', *The Journal of Economic History* (1974), p.783; T. Haskell, 'The True and Tragical History of *Time on the Cross*', *New York Review of Books* (2 Oct 1975); H. Gutman, 'The Word Two Cliometricians made', *Journal of Negro History* (1975), p.12; Stone, 'History and the Social Sciences', pp.32-33.

[10] Fitch, 'Statistical Fantasies', p.249.

quantitative methods – famously lost faith with the enterprise, arguing that the modest results had failed to fulfil the hopes of 20 years' work and the millions of expenditure.[11] Stone complained that most huge projects had simply delivered 'huge piles of greenish printouts gathering dust in scholars' offices; many turgid and excruciatingly dull tomes full of tables and figures, and abstract algebraic expressions and percentages given to two decimal places.'[12] He called for a 'revival of the narrative': in essence, a return to histories which focussed first and foremost on the detailed recovery of events and human experiences, and which tried above all to 'tell a good story' to the reader.[13] Although he does not explicitly acknowledge it, the influence of poststructuralism on Stone's thinking was clear. In this respect, his conversion to what would latterly become known as 'microhistory' necessarily led him to advocate the divorce of the historian from computer analysis. Stone was soon joined by fellow quantifiers James Henretta and later Theodore Hamerow, who had become similarly pessimistic that their undertakings would ever be worth the effort.[14]

In the 1980s, the quantifiers were placed under still greater intellectual pressure by the new influence of the Annales School, and historians influenced by the 'linguistic turn'.[15] These scholars – increasingly interested in deconstructing metanarratives and in recreating day-to-day life experiences – plainly rejected the notion that humanity could be statistically understood through classification, ontology, and aggregation, or that it was possible to ever write a 'total History'. Although it is easy to exaggerate the directly-acknowledged influence of this new thinking, it nevertheless seems beyond debate that scholars in this decade were generally becoming increasingly uncomfortable with grand narratives and historical work which purported to present some kind of objective truth or mathematical law. This called many of the quantifiers' core assumptions into doubt. The objective and material reality of social class, the preponderance of rational self-interest in economic and political behaviour, and the idea that universal models (such as that proposed by Marx) could explain historical change, were all challenged. Still more devastating was an attack on the idea that stochastic historical human behaviour could ever be statistically described by laws of chance, thus rendering patterns based on the traditional mass-recording of numerical human data unreliable.[16] Nancy Fitch – a trenchant critic –

[11] Stone, 'Revival of the Narrative', pp.12-13.

[12] Stone, 'Revival of the Narrative', p.12.

[13] Stone, 'Revival of the Narrative', pp.13-19.

[14] J. Henretta, 'Social History as Lived and Written', *American Historical Review* (1979); T. Hamerow, 'The Bureaucratization of History', *The American Historical Review* (1989), p.657.

[15] H. White, *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (1973); G. Himmelfarb, 'Some Reflections on the New History', *American Historical Review* (1989), p.661; Fitch, 'Statistical Fantasies', pp.239-54; E. Johnson, 'Reflections on an Old "New History": Quantitative Social Science History in Postmodern Middle Age', *Central European History* (1989), pp.409-413, 419. For further discussion of the influence of the 'linguistic turn' on Political History, see above pp.13-18.

[16] See I. Hacking, *The Taming of Chance* (Cambridge, 1990) for a history of the social significance of numbers and counting. From the turn of the century, Hacking argues that the old 'rational' view of a world governed by inexorable truths became progressively weaker, and that human behaviour became increasingly understood as possessing a strong random element.

argued that the mere use of these flawed totalising patterns 'created reality' and produced 'false truths'.[17] It was thus not just the objections of Rankean traditionalists, nor self-doubt from quantifiers on poor cost-benefit returns that was really causing the new History to falter, but a re-evaluation of the widely-held, variously inflected postwar view of human nature and psychology as being explicable in mechanical terms, and thus mappable by statistical rule or law of chance.[18]

The intellectual landscape of the late 1980s was not, therefore, one where the emerging discipline of Corpus Linguistics – based on the quantification and generalisation of human language patterns via costly and labour-intensive giant corpora – was ever likely to cross-fertilise with History.[19] Corpus-driven electronic text analysis did not implicitly rely on categorisation or require complex statistical modelling techniques, and could easily be used in conjunction with qualitative analysis. However, the seeming similarities it shared with by-now taboo old white elephants of the 1960s and 1970s were too great for it to be taken particularly seriously. Hardly surprisingly, critics who were previously sceptical about the viability of quantifying even seemingly measurable historical demographics, were hardly enthused by the systemised numerical analysis of *language*– seemingly one of the most ephemeral, fuzzy, and context-sensitive of all objects of historical enquiry.[20] Corpora could not hope to flourish in such a blasted landscape, and were not given the chance they were in other text-based disciplines such as Literary Studies or Politics.

In many ways, not a great deal has changed since the 1980s. Outside of Economic History, there have been very few primarily quantitative history projects, and negligible engagement with corpus-driven text analysis despite the enormous free availability of machine-readable digital texts via the internet.[21] Indeed, even the publication of multi-million word diachronic databanks of text – such as *The Old Bailey Online*, *The Oxford English Dictionary*, *The Times Digital Archive*, and *Hansard's Parliamentary Debates* – has had little impact in this regard. While these are enormously popular amongst historians, this is largely on account of their improved accessibility and searchability: boons

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This resulted in the writing of mathematical 'laws of chance' to better understand – and predict – this randomness, much as a gambler might statistically analyse a set of fruit machines to improve his future chances.

[17] Fitch, 'Statistical Fantasies', pp.240-49.

[18] For a detailed overview of the use of quantitative methods in History up to 1989, see Johnson, 'Reflections', and Stone, 'History and the Social Sciences'.

[19] I define Corpus Linguistics as 'emerging' at this time in that its techniques became sufficiently established, and corpora became sufficiently obtainable, for corpus-driven methodologies to start to interest those outside the field (although the impact has been greatest in the last decade). See T. McEnery and A. Wilson, 'Early Corpus Linguistics' in *Corpus Linguistics: an Introduction*, pp.1-26; S. Adolphs, *Introducing Electronic Text Analysis: A practical guide for language and literary students* (Trowbridge, 2006), p.1; G. Kennedy, *A Introduction to Corpus Linguistics* (1998), p.2; Greenstein, *Historian's Guide*, p.158.

[20] For early criticisms of Corpus Linguistics, see especially the writings of Noam Chomsky. See McEnery and Wilson, *Corpus Linguistics*, pp.5-13.

[21] G. Welling, 'Can Computers help us read History Better? Computerised text analysis on four editions of the outline of American History', *History & Computing* (2001), p.152; R. Fogel and G. Elton, *Which Road to the Past? Two Views of History* (1984); Greenstein, *Historian's Guide*, pp.6-30; Adolphs, *Electronic Text Analysis*, p.81.

which facilitate and accelerate qualitative research rather than allow new kinds of quantitative research. Although it has never been easier to employ corpus-based methods, the idea of historians using corpora to quantitatively analyse historical questions has barely left the starting blocks.[22]

The root cause of this continuing indifference is perhaps that, in most areas of History, the sharply-focussed understanding of the particular is favoured above the broad but potentially arbitrary overview of the general. This is not to say historians do not quantify, or do not use statistical data, but when they do it is usually to illustrate a point already made qualitatively: it is seldom the engine that leads analysis. Theodore Rabb suggests that quantitative endeavourers are often seen as 'remote and abstract, and not especially interesting…backdrop[s] to the sharply-focused, localised investigation…clearing the undergrowth for the 'real work' of History'.[23] For Gordon Leff, the very way in which we write History is dictated by ingrained epistemological models, and this intellectual scaffolding largely determines the building that emerges. In this respect, deeply entrenched conceptions of 'what History is' cannot change quickly, and it is thus perhaps inevitable that historians will not easily be convinced by something that intuitively seems so foreign.[24] In this respect, the proponents of quantitative language analysis perhaps face the steepest of uphill struggles. As Evan Mawdsley and Thomas Munck argue, language is seen as possessing 'a vast range of associations, contextual undercurrents, and implicit values which can be lost through attempted systemisation'. Given this, historians are naturally reluctant to distance themselves from the fuzzy, intuitive, nuanced understanding gleaned by manual reading.[25]

It perhaps unsurprising, then, that corpora have found little favour in British Political History. Indeed, the recent move towards local studies – which naturally trade explanatory ambition for depth of reading – have perhaps pushed the field still further away from quantitative language analysis. Political scientists, on the other hand, have travelled in the opposite direction, taking advantage of new digital tools and resources with remarkable speed. Scholars have quantitatively investigated (for example) the use of religious references in American presidential campaigns (Hart), the ideology of Liberalism (De Beaugrande), the concept of freedom in the British debate on foxhunting (Baker), and the wooing of the middle classes by new Labour (Fairclough).[26] The object of study (political

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[22] There are, of course, a good number of corpus linguistics projects which use historical corpora. Some recent examples are the *Corpus of English Dialogues 1560-1760*, *The Historical Corpus of the Welsh Language*, and *The Lampeter Corpus of Early-Modern English Tracts*. However, these linguists are naturally primarily interested in answering linguistic, rather than historical, research questions.

[23] T. Rabb, 'The Development of Quantification in Historical Research', *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* (1983), p. 595.

[24] G. Leff, 'Models inherent in History', in T. Shanin (ed.), *The Rules of the Game: Cross-Disciplinary essays on Models in Scholarly Thought* (London, 1972), pp.148-9, 159-60.

[25] E. Mawdsley and T. Munck, *Computing for Historians: an Introductory Guide* (1993), p.169.

[26] Recent examples include R Hart, *Campaign Talk: why elections are good for us* (Princeton, 2000); G. Cook, *Genetically Modified Language: the discourse of argument for GM crops and food* (Abingdon, 2004); W. Teubert, 'Keywords in Eurosceptic discourse in Britain' in A. Musolff, C. Good, P. Points and R. Wittlinger (eds.), *Attitudes towards Europe: language in the unification process* (Aldershot, 2001); D. Orpin, 'Corpus Linguistics and Critical Discourse Analysis:

speeches) is identical, but contrasting academic cultures have led to the political scientists welcoming (perhaps too uncritically) the advent of corpus-based text analysis, and historians ignoring it or viewing it with suspicion. A good deal of caution is no doubt for the best. The brave new world famously predicted by Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie in 1979 where 'tomorrow's historian must be able to program a computer in order to survive', or Edward Shorter's vision of 1971 where the future historian abandoned his book-lined study for the 'flashing lights…and great grey machines' of the computer centre, would be a barren land indeed.[27] But computing in History, like in other fields, is beginning to return slowly but surely after seeing disappointment follow apocalyptic predication. Things have changed a great deal since the 1980s: corpus-driven quantification has plainly succeeded in the analysis of identical material in other fields, and many of the old drawbacks of cost and manpower have almost entirely vanished. This dissertation argues that the time is right to give corpora the chance in History they previously were denied, and to ask ourselves in what ways, if any, they should change our approach to studying language.

II

The Case for Corpora: The Theory

So, why use corpora to study political speech? The strongly-supported assumption that lies at the heart of Corpus Linguistics is that a speaker or a writer's choice of words is never random. Counting them and/or observing patterns formed by them can thus be a productive enterprise, especially through comparisons with other speakers or writers.[28] Concordance and collocation techniques do not just tell us about the mechanics of language use, but also about the way a speaker presents a given topic through his or her choice of words.[29] Linguists using large corpora of contemporary language are able

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Examining the ideology of sleaze', *International Journal of Corpus Linguistics* (2005); N. Fairclough, *New Labour, New Language?* (London, 2000); R. De Beaugrande, 'Discourse Studies and Ideology: On 'liberalism' and 'liberalisation' in three large corpora of English', *Discourse Studies* (1999). See also the collection D. Archer (ed.), *What's in a Word-list? Investigating word frequency and keyword extraction* (Bodmin, 2009).

[27] E. Le Roy Ladurie, S. Reynolds and B. Reynolds (trans.), *The Territory of the Historian* (Chicago, 1979), p.6, 15; E. Shorter, *The Historian and the Computer; a Practical Guide* (Engelwood Cliffs, 1971), p.12.

[28] D. Archer, 'Does Frequency Really Matter?' in Archer (eds.), *What's in a Word-List?*, p.1; Hart, *Campaign Talk*, pp.23-24; M. Atkinson, *Our Master's Voices: The Language and Body Language of Politics*, (London, 1984); J. Wilson, *Politically Speaking* (Oxford, 1990). In the field of philosophy, the use of speech has been investigated by L. Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations* (2nd edn, Oxford, 1958); J. Austin, *How to Do Things with Words* (Oxford, 1962); and J. Searle, *Speech Acts* (Cambridge, 1969), and later by poststructuralists such as Michel Foucault and Jacques Derrida. For a fuller discussion, see above pp.13-18, and P. Readman, 'Speeches' in M. Dobson B. Ziemann (eds.), *Reading Primary Sources: The Interpretation of texts from 19th and 20th Century History* (Abingdon, 2009), pp. 209-226.

[29] The idea that patterns in language – even unconscious ones – can tell us a great deal about subconscious perceptions is grounded in the theory that (to some extent) language precedes and shapes the way we think. This was suggested by psycholinguists studying child language such as Lev Semenovich Vygotsky and Jean Piaget, and more notably by Michel Foucault and Jacques Derrida. For a fuller summary, see M. Davies, *Asking the Law Question* (Sydney, 2008), pp.229-35.

to investigate quite precise aspects of lexis. For example, they are able to analyse the linguistic relationship between the words 'complete' and 'utter', they can investigate adjectives which collocate with 'woman' more often than with 'man', and they even claim to better understand novels by numerically assessing the use of grammatical function words such as 'the' and 'and'.[30] There is also even a large sub-branch of the field which analyses style using word-association patterns, attempting (for example) to numerically describe Charles Dickens' humour.[31] Statistically derived algorithms of literary style are also often used to help us attribute authorship, period, or genre to texts where they are unknown or in dispute.[32]

Although at first glance such techniques would not appear especially useful to historians, I will argue that political speeches – and the scholarly questions we tend to ask of them – are in many ways *even better* suited to these techniques. The first argument is that even a modest degree of quantification can considerably advance our understanding of a vast discourse such as an election campaign. This is because political historians are generally concerned with rather more conceptual and abstract research questions than the intricacies of grammatical patterns, use of the passive voice, and recurring lexicon. They are interested in broad topics of debate such as the use of the language of the monarchy by Conservatives, the displacement of the rhetoric of Whiggism by that of radicalism, or the political communication of 'Britishness' during the height of Imperialism. Evidence that might represent major findings in all three debates (and in innumerable others) can often be found surprisingly easily: through simple word-counts and browsing word frequency lists which would probably tell us little if we were investigating the finer technicalities of language as a linguist would. A corpus can show, for instance, at the click of a mouse, that Conservatives mentioned the Monarchy an average of once per typical speech during the six elections between 1880-1900 in East Anglia, but that this was still 48% more often than Liberals.[33] Similarly, it can show that the term 'Whig' was barely mentioned in East Anglia (or in national election speeches) after 1885, and that uses of the terms 'Britain' and 'British' came close to exceeding 'England' and 'English' in 1900 and 1906, while barely registering in 1892 and 1895.[34] Although all three sets of readings require a good deal more analysis to become noteworthy, few historians would dispute that each is at least an embryonic finding of some potential. This illustrates the power of even simple word-counting. As Robert Fogel has

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[30] M. Davies, 'Word frequency in context: alternative architectures for examining related words, register variation and historical change' in Archer (eds.), *What's in a Word-List?*, pp. 53-68; M. Hoey, M. Mahlberg, M. Stubbs and W. Teubert, *Text, Discourse and Corpora- Theory and Analysis* (London, 2007), p.223; J. Sinclair, *Corpus, Concordance, Collocation* (Oxford, 1991), pp.70-5.

[31] M. Mahlberg, 'Corpus Stylistics: bridging the gap between literary and linguistic studies', in Hoey, Mahlberg, Stubbs, Teubert (eds.), *Text, Discourse and Corpora*, pp.219-46.

[32] See esp. the work of John Burrows, for example J. Burrows, 'Textual Analysis' in S. Schreibman et al (eds.), *A Companion to Digital Humanities* (Oxford, 2004), pp. 323-47.

[33] For further discussion of this example, and figures, see below p.39.

[34] The full figures (for both parties) for the lemmas 'Britain' and 'England' respectively are: 43-289 (1880), 27-166 (1885), 64-249 (1886), 16-164 (1892); 16-175 (1895), 127-170 (1900), 107-141 (1906); 60-242 (Jan. 1910), 70-173 (Dec. 1910).

argued, 'dramatic shifts in emphasis can occur from moving from a general impression to an actual count'.[35]

Much of the fruit that can be harvested from quantification in History is, therefore, rather low-lying. Because election campaigns are a vast multi-million word discourse – the majority of which historians have probably not read – a basic quantitative picture can be highly illuminating. Indeed, the impact that even rudimentary measurement and counting has already had on recent scholarship in political language bears testimony to this. A.K. Russell, Neal Blewett, and Paul Readman – through labour-intensive studies taking many weeks – manually counted references to key issues in candidates' election addresses in 1895, 1900, 1906, and 1910.[36] These studies have been highly influential, and subsequent historians when writing (for example) about the 1895 and 1900 elections, often now use Readman's quantification to illustrate the general political landscape and thus to better contextualise their own enquiries.[37] We might reasonably conclude, then, that if this extremely basic quantification relying on manual counting is so useful, a corpus with considerably greater power, flexibility, and scope, has at least the potential to go a lot further if we use it intelligently.

The second argument is that it is comparatively easy to build, and to fruitfully analyse, a corpus of election speeches. As John Sinclair argues, the numerical results from any corpus are only valuable if its constituent texts accurately represent the subject of study: otherwise the GIGO ('Garbage-in, Garbage-out') effect may ensue.[38] It is relatively easy to create a large corpus of electoral language which reasonably represents the speaking campaign without being skewed towards certain texts. The verbosity of party speakers and the dedication of the contemporary press give us the luxury of choice, allowing us to pedantically create corpora sorted by party, general election campaign, and even weighted so as to equally represent each and every constituency. Still more critical is the fact that electoral discourse contains many naturally occurring groups which enable logical like-for-like comparisons: between parties, elections, and localities. This allows the numbers to be assessed in context, which cannot logically happen if one corpus is being interrogated in isolation.

With other collections of text, there are seldom such helpful and binary dividing lines. Because of this, the composition of many other corpora could be criticised as being somewhat

[35] Fogel, 'The Limits', p.337.

[36] A. Russell, *Liberal Landslide: the General Election of 1906* (Newton Abbot, 1973), pp.64-94; N. Blewett, *The Peers, the Parties and the People: the General Elections of 1910* (Bristol, 1972), pp. 209-22; P. Readman, 'The 1895 General Election and Political Change in late Victorian Britain', *Historical Journal* (1999), p.471, 475 and 'The Conservative Party, Patriotism, and British Politics: the case of the General Election of 1900', *Journal of British Studies* (2001), pp.114-16.

[37] See I. Sharpe, 'Empire, Patriotism and the Working-Class Electorate: The 1900 General Election in the Battersea Constituency', *Parliamentary History* (2009), p.393, 410, M. Brodie, *The Politics of the Poor: the East End of London 1885-1914* (Oxford, 2004), pp.86-7; M. Cragoe and C. Williams, *Wales and War: Society, Politics and Religion in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (Cardiff, 2007), p.102; M. Roberts, '"Villa toryism" and popular conservatism in Leeds, 1885-1902', *Historical Journal* (2006), p.232; A. Windscheffel, *Popular Conservatism in Imperial London, 1868-1906* (London, 2007), p.73, 78.

[38] Sinclair, *Corpus, Concordance, Collocation*, p.13; Stone, 'History and the Social Sciences', p.32; Greenstein, *Historian's Guide*, p.14.

arbitrary. For example, a corpus which aspires to fairly represent the entirety of the modern English language requires all manner of decisions to be made on what genres of text should be included, and in what quantities. The Lancaster-Oslo/Bergen corpus, for example, is comprised of fixed percentages of text from numerous categories, including predetermined allocations for science-fiction literature, press reporting, religious texts, and radio shows.[39] A potentially arbitrary judgement call must be made at every turn on what to include and how much. Even if the genre of constituent texts can be controlled (perhaps for a more focussed literary study) it is rarely possible to keep a tight rein on other contextual factors of the included texts. To use a corpus to situate the language of *Jane Eyre* (1847) within the overall literary style of its period demands that the scholar finds as large a number of novels written as close to 1847 as possible, which in practice is often impossible for reasons of scarcity. To use another example, there is nothing one-hundred percent thematically and chronologically comparable to *Sherlock Holmes* stories. Practical necessity thus forces a scholar to dilate his or her focus to assemble a corpus of worthwhile size; he or she (to continue the above examples) might simply use a corpus of nineteenth century fiction selected by availability and accept its limitations.[40] All this is not to argue that other corpus-based studies are not valuable (indeed, they are often able to mitigate these ambiguities simply through overwhelming size)[41] but that a corpus of electoral language is mercifully free of many of these anatomical problems.

The third argument concerns the actual language of electoral politics itself. Arguably, political language (especially if it is deployed in an election meeting) is by nature much more likely to be deliberately partisan, current, and directed towards achieving a clear instrumental goal.[42] This level of contextual certainty is simply not present in many other types of language. In the linguist's common quarry (the language of everyday life) words are naturally used in innumerable different settings and for different purposes by a wealth of different people: to persuade, instruct, entertain, or to convey happiness, anger, love, etc. The language of election stump speeches was largely deployed with the obvious and tangible partisan intention to persuade the audience to vote for that candidate or party, usually as unambiguously as possible.[43] This more universal contextual clarity and explicitness renders

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[39] D. Biber, S. Conrad and R. Reppen, *Corpus Linguistics: investigating Language Structure and Use* (Cambridge, 1998), p.14.

[40] Take for example, Mahlberg, 'Corpus Stylistics', p. 224. She analyses Charles Dickens' *Bleak House* (1853) and uses as a reference corpus 29 novels by 18 authors taken from the electronic text repository *Project Gutenburg.* She describes this as a 'Nineteenth Century Corpus' and it is compared with Dickens to investigate how his style was distinctive from that of his peers. The idea that 18 authors can constitute a "Nineteenth Century Corpus' is naturally somewhat problematic, as is the fact that some of the 29 novels were written decades after 1853.

[41] M. Scott, 'In search of a bad reference corpus' in Archer (eds.), *What's in a Word List?*, p.80; T. Berber-Sardinha, 'Using KeyWords in text analysis: Practical aspects' in *Applied Linguistics and Language Studies (LAEL, DIRECT Papers)*, pp.1-9.

[42] Hart, *Campaign Talk*, pp. 26-9; Atkinson, *Our Masters' Voices*, pp. xvii, 11-12.

[43] Atkinson, *Our Masters' Voices*, p.11; Wilson, *Politically Speaking*, pp.3-4. In a popular advisory manual for candidates on how to fight elections (published in 1905 and 1909) the section on speechmaking advised candidates to 'be short, [and] be simple', and to avoid the 'diluted eloquence' of orations lasting more than half an hour. See J. Lloyd, *Elections and How to Fight Them* (London, 1905), pp. 18-23. When speakers were too verbose, they risked diluting their message to an audience

political language more powerfully barometric, and enables us to more safely assume that significance can be derived from word-frequency in a linear fashion.[44] For example, if 'fish' is mentioned 90 times in one short speech or text, it is not necessarily three times more significant as it would have been had it been mentioned 30 times. This is principally due to the neurological phenomenon of 'semantic saturation' where repetition of the same word or phrase within a certain time or textual space has ever less impact on the listener or reader.[45] However, in a corpus of electoral language which includes a wide sample of speakers, places, and dates, semantic saturation is unlikely to be a problem. Thus, if (for example) 'allotment' is mentioned 37 times by East Anglian Liberals in the 1892 corpus subsection and then 16 times in the identically sampled 1895 subsection, we can be more sure the 157% numerical decline reflects a genuine corresponding 157% fall in its significance.

This dissertation does not contend that we should simply see words as counters, and sentences merely as aggregations of the words they comprise, despite the arguments for corpora given above. Quite clearly, it would be a foolish study which treated 'the dog bit the man' and 'the man bit the dog' identically. Furthermore, even in isolation, individual words do not have the same power, which is why those that appear infrequently tend to arouse greater attention when uttered: if 'antidisestablishmentarianism' is used only once, it might have more impact than 'church' mentioned several times. Also, given that language shifts and changes continually, we cannot fully appreciate the resonances particular words carried when they were uttered over a hundred years ago. Even if it is easy to construct comparative corpora of political language, easy to ask historically meaningful questions of them, and easy to claim the numbers might mean something, we must still advance with considerable caution, and a continual parallel qualitative reading of the same text, if a strong case is to be built.

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who could get bored. According to the diary of the Hon. J. De Grey, who helped the Conservatives fight elections in rural Norfolk in 1885, Samuel Hoare (the candidate for the North Norfolk division) 'lost an election he might have won by talking himself out of it' while he applauded Sir. W. Tyssen-Amherst (South-West Norfolk) for making 'the shortest and best speech I have heard him make yet' at a village meeting. Another party helper, Harry Woods, also criticised East Norfolk candidate Henry Rider Haggard's speech for being 'too much of an essay'. See 'Election letters', Norwich Record Office ref: WLSLX/43-44/1-32,42978. Of course, all this is not to say that the delivery of a brief partisan message was the *only* purpose of meetings. H. Matthew, 'Rhetoric and Politics' in P. Waller (ed.), in *Politics and Social Change in Modern Britain* (Brighton, 1987), p.51, contends that Liberal meetings were also about the ventilation of ideas. While this is an important point, it nevertheless seems hard to dispute the overwhelmingly partisan basis of party meetings.

[44] Hart, *Campaign Talk*, pp.26-7; P. Tetlock, 'Cognitive Style and Political Ideology', *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* (1983), pp.118-26 and 'Cognitive Style and Political Belief Systems in the British House of Commons', *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* (1984), pp.365-73.

[45] For the debate on semantic saturation see R. Dodge, 'The laws of relative fatigue', *Psychology Review*, (1917), pp. 89-113; E. Severance and M. Washburn, 'The loss of associative power in words after long fixation', *American Journal of Psychology* (1907), pp. 182-186. See also L. Jakobovits, 'Effects of repeated stimulation on cognitive aspects of behaviour: some experiments on the phenomenon of semantic saturation' (PhD, McGill University, 1962).

III

The Case for Corpora: Practical Benefits

Let us now turn to some potential practical benefits, of which this section explores four. The first is that the quantitative intuition of human beings – our ability to estimate frequency across a long text like an election speaking campaign – can be flawed. Joseph Meisel's suggestion that, in 1886, candidates were 'under no compulsion to speak on Ireland unless their constituency had a large Irish population' is rendered highly dubious by a simple concordance: in East Anglia (which had a negligible Irish population)[46] and on the national stage – amongst both parties – Ireland was mentioned between 375 to 500 times in each 50,000 word election subsample.[47] It alone thus comprised around one percent of *all words uttered*: on par with frequencies for basic words in the English language such as 'they', 'make', 'want', and 'must'. Meisel's seemingly considerable misjudgement is equalled by Paul Nicholls' claim that Ritualism in the election of 1900 was the second most important issue after the Boer War, and was a genuinely national question.[48] In a bi-partisan 200,000 word sample of election language from both the East Anglian and national corpora, 'ritual' (and all derivatives) is mentioned just six times in 1900, behind even 'telegram' (nine mentions), 'beer' (eight), and 'fish' (fourteen). H.C.G. Matthew's argument that the Queen was one of 'the three simple, telling cries of late-Victorian Tory rhetoric' (the others being the Church and Imperialism) can be similarly questioned by the citing two interesting readings.[49] First, none of the keywords which most closely correlated with mentions of the monarchy (namely 'King', 'Queen', 'Monarch', 'Majesty', 'Royal', 'Crown', and 'Victoria') appeared strikingly more often in the speeches of East Anglian Conservatives than their Liberal opponent between 1880 and 1900.[50] Second, the Conservative aggregate for all seven keywords in these six elections (175) translated to an average of just one mention per 3,000 word speech report. 'Queen' (at 40 mentions) was cited less by Conservatives than railways, allotments, cottages, parishes, and various farm animals.[51]

This use of the corpus is rather simple and unnuanced, but it does strongly suggest that the quantitative intuition of human beings – our ability to estimate importance, frequency, and significance across a long text like an election speaking campaign – can be flawed. In a way, this is not surprising, as it has been widely demonstrated that – in comparison to a computer – humans are

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[46] B. Walter, *Outsiders inside: Whiteness, Place, and Irish Women* (London and New York, 2001), pp.122-3.

[47] J. Meisel, *Public speech and the culture of public life in the age of Gladstone* (New York, 2001), pp.227-28. This is discussed in more detail below on pp.97-101.

[48] P. Nicholls, *Khaki and the Confessional: a Study of a Religious Issue at the 1900 General Election in England* (Melbourne, 2000), pp.3-5, 313, 316.

[49] Matthew, 'Rhetoric', p.50.

[50] Readings for these lemmas across the whole 1880-1910 period in East Anglia (9 general elections, and 450,000 words per party) were (for Conservatives and Liberals respectively): 'King': 56-48; 'Queen': 40-22; 'Monarch': 3-2; 'Majesty': 47-20; 'Royal': 14-14; 'Crown': 13-11; 'Victoria': 2-1.

[51] The totals being: Railway: 57, allotment: 52, cottage: 50, 'parish': 88, and farm animals ('cow', 'horse', and 'pig'): 63.

poor judges of quantity. Inevitably, it is the tendency when processing large amounts of data, to be drawn to the few exciting spots of colour on the canvas that are interesting or relevant to a preconceived area of interest and to largely ignore the dull sea of grey surrounding them. This tendency, perhaps inevitably, can cause us to overweigh the importance of material relevant to our chosen subject relative to other material which seems uninteresting and/or irrelevant. It is hard for the human mind to empirically keep track of multiple emerging patterns over a sustained period of reading, especially if those patterns have not been earmarked for investigation in advance. Indeed, the linguist J. Charles Alderson recently conducted an investigation where the intuitive judgements of professional linguists 'did not reflect frequency counts particularly well…[or]…inspire confidence in word frequency judgements as surrogates for objective computerized frequency measures'.[52] A great deal has also been written in the fields of psychology and neuroscience on the potential fallibility of human memory.[53] For example, a recent article in *Nature Reviews Neuroscience* concerning illusion in stage magic found that audiences had particular difficulty noticing even quite substantial changes in background details which were not the primary focus of the magic trick.[54] This phenomenon was also famously shown by Illinois psychologists when a group of volunteers was asked to count the number of times a basketball was quickly passed between players in a short film. The result was almost always that the volunteers correctly counted the passes, but were oblivious to the man in a gorilla suit who danced across the screen.[55] Overall, it seems difficult to escape the conclusion that human memory and quantitative judgement are far from perfect, and it seems doubtful that many of the aforementioned historians – if they had had access to a corpus of the language that they sought to generalize – would have advanced these conclusions as stridently, if at all. As Robert Fogel has argued, 'dramatic shifts in emphasis can occur from moving from a general impression to an actual count', and even Lawrence Stone – a famous critic of quantification in History – has acknowledged that it 'can often totally destroy unfounded hypotheses based on purely literary efforts'.[56]

The second major practical benefit that corpora might offer is the potential to improve our ability to evidence our findings. The current historiographical practice of establishing typicality and significance in language is principally through selecting representative quotations. This is dangerous when the text under consideration – an election speaking campaign – is so enormous, and was articulated by so many different individuals. Habitually, a historian of language cites a small number – sometimes just a solitary – supporting quotation, and asks us to view the example(s) as being reflective of a more general situation. Joyce for example argues that 'moral aspiration, religion,

[52] J. Alderson, 'Judging the Frequency of English Words', *Applied Linguistics* (2007), p. 383.

[53] See the recent A. Byatt and H. Wood (eds.), *Memory: an Anthology* (2009), esp. the contributions of U. Neisser, 'Memory with a Grain of Salt', pp.80-88 and S. Rose, 'Memories are Made of This', pp. 54-67.

[54] S. Macknik, M. King, J. Randi, A. Robbins, J. Thompson, and S. Martinez-Conde, 'Attention and awareness in stage magic: turning tricks into research', *Nature Reviews Neuroscience* (2008).

[55] D. Simons, C. Chabris, 'Gorillas in our midst: sustained inattentional blindness for dynamic events', *Perception* (1999). See also D. Simons and C. Chabris, *The Invisible Gorilla: and other ways our intuition deceives us* (New York, 2010).

[56] Fogel, 'The Limits', p. 337; Stone, 'History and the Social Sciences', p.29.

romanticism and utopian vistas dominated popular Liberal appeal in the 1860s and 1870s', but his evidence is one footnote from a speech by John Bright.[57] Edward Steele tells us that Salisbury's rhetoric was filled with religious references, but gives us one footnote (from a letter, not a speech), while Lynch argues that outdated radical traditions such as Luddism and Chartism continued to form a bulwark of the Liberal appeal in the countryside even in the years after 1885, but offers only two quotations from speeches in support.[58] These examples are not intended to represent particular criticisms of these historians but to argue that, while a small number of quotations can certainly illustrate, they represent very limited evidence of typicality and significance.

Indeed, it is also difficult to believe, in an abstract sense, that any quotation, or selection of quotes, *could ever* be entirely representative of a potentially complex theme like Imperialism or radicalism in such a huge text even assuming the perfect judgement of a historian. Perhaps most importantly, selected quotations only help us when we want to show the reader something which is *in* the text. We very often want to show – like Meisel with Ireland in 1886 – that something *is not* in the text, or is *seldom* in the text. It is possible to footnote presence, but not absence. Thus Joyce may be accurate when he suggests that class terms were 'remarkable for their absence' in the 1880-1914 period, and Lynch may be similarly correct to argue that rural Conservatives 'almost entirely neglected' Lloyd George's People's Budget in January 1910. But without a means of demonstrating absence, neither can provide supporting evidence. To show this dearth or paucity implicitly requires a mapping of the whole body of text (or at least a large sample of it) for it to make sense, which would then seemingly require some form of quantification. Overall, we might well find a noteworthy undulation by qualitative means, but with no verifiable way of assessing its typicality we cannot be entirely sure – or prove – that we have discovered an ant hill, a hillock, or a mountain. A corpus is perhaps one such way we can begin to measure, even if imperfectly.

This leads us to a third important practical benefit: a corpus' potential to improve the verifiability of scholarship. By footnoting a representative quotation, a historian invites us to investigate the original text and assess his or her ascription of its typicality. With a single novel or a speech this is less problematic, but when the text is much larger – like a regional or even national election discourse (potentially of millions of words) – it can become an unfeasible endeavour. And even when we are able to do this, our only means of disagreement with the original selected quotation is with selected counter-quote. The presentation of a Cox and a Bramley from a walled orchard tells us both types of apple can be found within, but gives no indication how many of each there might be, which is often the more crucial question. No doubt there *were* two or three instances of a Liberal candidate attacking Ritualism in the 1900 election as Nicholls shows us through quotations, but this evidence on its own does not allow us to verify whether he is right to see the issue as a *significant*

[57] P. Joyce, *Visions of the People: industrial England and the question of class, 1840-1914* (Cambridge, 1991), p.51, 53.

[58] E. Steele, 'Lord Salisbury and his Northern Audiences', *Northern History*, vol.31 (1995) p.229; P. Lynch, *The Liberal Party in rural England 1885-1910: radicalism and community* (Oxford, 2003), pp.25-31.

trend, or whether it was merely mentioned two or three times in a handful of speeches amongst thousands.

In this respect, corpora could make it easier for historians to communicate exactly what they mean when they attribute significance and typicality, and make it easier for others to verify. At present, historians use adjectives rather than numbers to describe the characteristics of a text. However, descriptors such as 'enormous', 'slightly', 'considerable', 'great' etc. are inherently opaque, and poor at conveying exactly what we mean, even if we know it ourselves. Of course, historians are often simply trying to convey a general holistic feeling about their text which is not provable by word-counts which they judge, as experts, to be noteworthy. While this is a powerful argument, taking it to its logical end-point would more or less absolve historians of all burden of proof when they attribute significance and typicality, and turn the debate largely into one of semantics. Corpora might improve the precision of arguments– and consequently their verifiability – by enabling us to communicate quantity much more clearly. If a historian argues that East Anglian Liberals based their appeal in 1868 primarily on Church freedom then the numerical supporting evidence for the quantitative aspect of his or her judgement can be supplied through tables and graphs, and the publication (online or on CD) of the corpus itself. These can be used to investigate, verify, or challenge the conclusions of the author. If his interpretation is dubious, the material to prove him wrong is sitting on the adjacent page, or at worst, a few mouse clicks away.

A second important point is that because computers require the input of black-and-white, unambiguous data to function, a corpus forces the scholar to state his or her research aims and underlying assumptions more explicitly.[59] In other words, the historian must define exactly what he or she means (for example) by the language of Imperialism, as I have done in the appendices of each of the following chapters in the form of taxonomies that (in my judgement) correlate with the issues and ideas I wish to investigate. Although the discipline of rigorously defining our key terms of enquiry might seem alien and prohibitively mechanical to historians, it can often prove beneficial. We are compelled to lay ourselves bare, and to articulate underlying assumptions on what things mean in a more explicit manner where they can be critically verified, rather than leaving them unstated.[60] In theory, the reader need no longer be kept in the dark to such an extent: he or she can be furnished not just with a historian's judgement, but also with a much fuller understanding of its basis and its parameters. Thus empowered, he or she can perhaps more easily engage with the author and interrogate, challenge, and verify the original findings, and ultimately enter the debate.[61]

The fourth and final benefit that corpus-driven quantification might bring is the potential to uncover unexpected and exciting new data. A computer can easily generate a 'word frequency list' for

[59] J. Unsworth, 'What is Humanities Computing and what is not?', *Jahrbuch für Computerphilologie*, (2002), pp.71-84; Greenstein, *Historian's Guide;* Welling, 'Computers', p.154; D. Sculley and Bradley Pasanek, 'Meaning and Mining: the impact of implicit assumptions in data mining for the humanities', *Literary and Linguistic Computing* (2008), p.422.

[60] Unsworth, 'Humanities Computing', section V.1; Sculley and Pasanek, 'Meaning and Mining', pp.410, 420-22.

[61] Sculley and Pasanek, 'Meaning and Mining', pp.420-22.

any corpus, showing a 'league table' of how many times each word is used. It is easy to compare two of these word frequency lists: perhaps Liberals versus Conservatives, the 1880 election versus 1885, or East Anglian speakers versus national speakers, etc. This more empirical approach allows a historian to notice things he or she might not have expected: phenomena not earmarked for investigation in advance that were perhaps so subtle they probably never would otherwise have been noticed. For example, I found two interesting trends through causally comparing word frequency lists. The first was in audience reactions noted in the speech reports (a common contemporary convention in newspapers) where the occasions audiences were reported as 'cheering' increases considerably in 1885 relative to 1880 in East Anglia, but remains static in meetings featuring national speakers.[62] Also, the number of times 'laughter' was reported was greater in Conservative meetings in every election from 1885 to 1900, often by a significant margin.[63] The second interesting trend was that the word 'gentlemen' was on average used more than twice as often as 'men' in 1880 and before, but after 1885, those ratios almost directly reverse: 'gentlemen' becomes much less common and 'man' more common, hinting at a subtle underlying change that even contemporaries themselves might very well not have noticed as they spoke.[64] I do not want to discuss either finding here, but few historians would dispute that embryonic conclusions of some potential might be drawn from them. Without the easily comparable datasets generated by a corpus, it seems unlikely that either of these subtle and unexpected trends would have been detected. So even if a corpus is used only for initial textual reconnaissance and abandoned thereafter, it still can illuminate fruitful avenues that might otherwise have stayed shrouded in darkness.[65]

[62] In East Anglia, the 1880 scores were: Conservative 275, Liberal: 271. In 1885 they were Conservative 320, Liberal 388, But on the national stage, the scores were almost identical: 303 and 306 for the Liberals in 1880 and 1885 respectively, and 320 and 319 for the Conservatives.

[63] The scores for 'laughter', for Conservatives and Liberals respectively, were: 128-114 (1885), 115-104 (1886), 144-92 (1892), 145-124 (1895), and 135-125 (1900).

[64] The respective scores for 'gentlemen'-'men' are: 250-105 (1880), 334-96 (1874), and 140-160 (1835). The average percentage ratio is 71-29. For the period after 1885, they are: 51-136 (1885), 91-183 (1886), 52-142 (1892), 112-159 (1895), and 20-178 (1900). The average respective percentage ratio is 33-67.

[65] This more conservative use of corpora can be seen in the work of Willibald Steinmetz. As part of his study of Parliamentary debates, Steinmetz selects sentences from the text which contain certain words or phrases, classifies them according to types, and then aggregates the results. See W. Steinmetz, 'A Code of its own: Rhetoric and Logic of Parliamentary Debate in Modern Britain', in *Finnish Yearbook* of *Political Thought* (2002), pp. 84-104.

IV

This Dissertation's Corpora

This final section outlines my plan for putting the above prescriptions into practice. It is about this dissertation's corpora: what they consist of, how they will be used, and how results generated by them will be interpreted and described. It will also simultaneously discuss some major objections that might be made to this dissertation's methodology.

Two corpora form the quantitative engine of this dissertation. The first is the 'East Anglian Corpus' which is composed of election-per-election subsamples of constituency Conservative and Liberal speech for the years 1880-1910. It contains approximately a million words in total. The speeches were taken from the Norfolk and Suffolk press, and each subsample contains equal word-counts for each party, and for each of the region's sixteen constituencies.[66] The second is the 'National Speaker Corpus'. This is composed of all the extra-Parliamentary orations of frontbench politicians delivered during election campaigns that were reported in *The Times*. It is similarly subdivided by party and by general election year, and contains approximately 1.5 million words. In both corpora, each subsection – for example East Anglian Conservative speeches in 1895, or national Liberal speeches in 1900 – is fixed at 50,000 words to enable direct like-for-like comparisons. In addition, this dissertation also occasionally refers to a third corpus of Parliamentary debates, compiled from Hansard, which provides a further useful reference. Finally, there are a handful of occasions when it uses special purpose-built corpora (for the Labour Party in Chapter Five, for example). Appendix A contains a comprehensive technical breakdown of the corpora, and the attached CD also contains the entire set of text files, along with two text analysis programmes, and a user-guide.

These corpora naturally have limitations. Seemingly the largest is that they do not perfectly represent the speeches that were actually delivered, as neither the press, nor Hansard, contained verbatim transcriptions. As Matthew has shown, even lengthy first-person reports of frontbench speakers in *The Times* did not contain all of what was said, and in the local press, third-person summaries were common.[67] Additionally, most newspapers were partisan, and may have deliberately reported the speeches of opponents inaccurately. While these issues represent potential problems for any historian of party language, it could be argued that they are particularly challenging to a corpus-based study. Critics have contended that underlying tensions within a corpus can skew the readings it

[66] Between 1885 and 1910, the borough seats were: Bury St. Edmunds, Ipswich (two seats), King's Lynn, Norwich (two seats), and Yarmouth. The counties were Eye, Lowestoft, Stowmarket, Sudbury, Woodbridge, and East Norfolk, Mid, Southern, South-Western, Northern, and North-Eastern. In 1880 before redistribution, the electoral map naturally looked quite different. The boroughs were Ipswich, Norwich, King's Lynn, Bury St. Edmunds, and Eye. The counties were Suffolk Eastern and Western, and West Norfolk, Northern, and Southern. Each returned two members, except for Eye which returned one.

[67] Matthew, 'Rhetoric and Politics', pp.45-7.

produces, and be close to impossible to detect from a table of aggregate figures. In other words, the GIGO phenomenon may easily prevail if the corpus' constituent texts are imperfect.[68]

Although this objection is a powerful one, three points of defence can be given. The first is to stress that speech reporting, while imperfect, was also (by any historical standard) extremely thorough. An average issue of *The Times* in the 1880s during an election campaign contained around 60,000 words of election speeches, and local papers featured around 30,000. Indeed, candidates often used press reports of what their opponents had said to frame their own speeches, suggesting a high level of faith in what was written.[69] Indeed, a widely-read advisory manual for candidates published in 1905 (and reprinted in 1909) drew the distinction between opponent's meetings that were not reported (where a party worker should be present to take notes) and ones which were (where such a precaution was unnecessary).[70] The main issue was thus not so much the quality of the reporting itself, but the fact that some meetings were omitted from newspapers entirely. While this defect is more clearly problematic for a sharply-focussed local-study trying to trace the narrative of a constituency struggle, it seems relatively harmless for a corpus which relies simply on a large sample of campaign language rather than a comprehensive sequence of speeches.

The second defence is that precise accuracy in reporting is not essential for a study of this kind. This is because the themes investigated with a corpus concern simple presence and absence of keywords pertaining to important issues and ideas. These are much more likely to survive in a condensed report than are the finer aspects of argument, lexicon or syntax which could be destroyed by abbreviation. Thus, if a 2,000-word Conservative speech attacking Gladstone over Irish Home Rule was reduced to a 500 word report, the surviving text is much more likely retain the speaker's core topic and message than it is the subtleties of his argument. This would seem to present more of a challenge to scholars such as Lynch or Musolf who sustain fine-grained arguments anchored in the nuances of individual pieces of rhetoric, than a quantitative study investigating simple themes over a long text. Problems with reliability might have a slight impact on an aggregate reading from a 50,000 word corpus subsample, but they could be fatal to an argument sustained by one or two quotations. This is not to suggest that a corpus-based approach does not need to treat its sources very carefully, but to refute the dubious claim that qualitative work is somehow intrinsically less vulnerable to suspect sources.

The third and final defence is to contend that the version of a speech which appeared in a newspaper was, in many ways, just as important as what was actually said, if not more so. The vast bulk of a speech's audience were newspaper readers, not the electors who physically attended the

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[68] See, for example R. Wachal, 'Humanities and Computers: A Personal View', *North American Review* (1971).

[69] Specific allusions by candidates to the accuracy of the local press can be found, for example, in the *Bury Free Press*, 27 Mar 1880 (Liberal Meeting at Bury), in the *East Anglian Daily Times*, 15 Jul 1895 (Liberal meeting at Stowmarket) and 26 Sept 1900 (Conservative meeting at Ipswich).

[70] Lloyd, *Elections and how to fight them*, p.30, 66.

meeting where it was delivered, or the fewer still who heard all of what was actually said.[71] Thus if a newspaper reported a different word to the one actually used, or ignored part of a speech, the resultant text was probably a more powerful influence on the unfolding discourse of the election campaign, and ultimately voter choice, than the speaker's exact words could ever have been.

* * *

While the source-base might permit corpora of election speeches to be viably assembled, there are still a number of difficulties which must be overcome to create a corpus which is high quality and (more crucially) properly representative of a speaking campaign. The first is simply the physical challenge of obtaining tens of thousands of words of machine-readable speeches accurately from old newsprint. This dissertation is fortunate that it can draw upon the *Times Digital Archive* to get a complete run of national speeches from election campaigns, and also benefits from the availability of *The Ipswich Journal* and *The Bury and Norwich Post* between 1880 and 1900, courtesy of the British Library's Nineteenth Century Newspapers Project. However, I still had to digitise over 85% of the East Anglian corpus from microfilm and bound volumes. In this respect, the dissertation is again fortunate that Optical Character Recognition (OCR) technology such as *Abby Finereader* permit previously unparalleled levels of recognition, and allow the user to train the software to detect even poor-quality newsprint with high reliability. I also read the entire corpus, and corrected it manually, to attain an estimated accuracy of 99%. Finally, I mitigated any remaining inaccuracies by searching only for the 'stem' of a word; for example 'imper' for 'imperial' or 'Glads' for 'Gladstone', and then by revisiting each hit in its original context (via a KWIC) to make sure nothing was included incorrectly.

The second difficulty is creating a corpus which is representative. In this respect, this dissertation was deliberately very strict, and used the full range of newspapers to create a main corpus which contains exactly equal amounts of speech for each of the nine elections, the sixteen East Anglian constituencies, and the two parties, rather than being biased geographically, chronologically, or politically. The East Anglian corpus also entirely avoids any internal mathematical weighting, and achieves this very deliberate anatomy entirely through careful sampling.[72] This is greatly more representative than many equivalent corpora in other fields whose constituent texts do not even share the same register, date, or genre. Tony McEnery's corpus spans several decades to incorporate all the writings of Mary Whitehouse, Wolfgang Teubert's work on British attitudes towards the European Community includes speeches, newspaper reports, and party literature to represent Euroscepticism,

[71] Meisel, *Public Speech*, pp.262-67; Matthew, 'Rhetoric and Politics', pp.41-42.

[72] This is to say that each constituency in the East Anglian corpus is represented by a minimum sample of text. For example, if 3,000 words per constituency is required, the corpus simply contains 3,000 words- it does not (for example) contain 1,500 for one constituency, 2,000 for another, and 6,000 for a third, and then multiply the results by two, 1.5, and 0.5 respectively to restore balance. This prevents the East Anglian corpus from becoming an uneven mathematical construct . See Appendix A, section I, for further elaboration.

and Norman Fairclough feels able to compare corpora of the language of 'new' Labour and 'old' Labour despite the first being comprised overwhelmingly of Tony Blair's speeches, and the second being made up almost entirely of manifestos and other written texts.[73] Paul Baker's corpus on the foxhunting debates of 2002 and 2003 divides the speeches of MPs in the Commons into 'pro' and 'anti' hunt based on their Commons votes for or against the ban, dangerously assuming that speeches so unambiguously followed behaviour at the lobbies on what was an unwhipped vote.[74] Arguably, these scholars are guilty of riding over real contextual problems that would rightly worry a historian. This dissertation's corpus consists entirely of election speeches, and is tightly controlled (and comparable) by party, date, and geography.

The third difficulty is whether the word-counts generated from the corpus – even if it is accurate and representative – can actually tell us anything historically meaningful. The first potential problem is size. A large corpus diminishes the probability that an individual rogue text – or indeed several rogue texts – will skew the overall readings significantly. However, this dissertation's corpora (at 1 and 1.5 million words each) are small by Corpus Linguistics standards: the Reuters Newswire Corpus, for example, is 90 million words, and the British National Corpus is 100 million. However, this dissertation's corpora are still considerably larger than many of those used in many literary and political analyses. McEnery's Mary Whitehouse corpus stands at 216,289 words (all of her writings), Baker's (on Fox Hunting) is 129,798, Ball's (on the Jane Austen novel *Emma*) is 159,613, and Fairclough's (on New Labour) is 287,666.

However, size is seldom as important a factor in establishing a corpus' power as is the ease by which its readings can meaningfully be compared against those of other corpora. Isolated word frequencies – for example that Gordon Brown mentioned 'change' 48 times in his party conference speech of 2009 – tell us little in themselves. Only when they are compared against like-for-like equivalents (for example David Cameron's score of 14 in his equivalent speech) do they begin to speak more loudly. In most corpus-based studies, just one comparative 'reference corpus' is used. Usually, this can answer a lot of questions: many of the main linguistic features of modern medical texts, for example, can be ascertained by a comparison with one of the generic master corpora of British English.[75] However, while a single point of comparison might permit us to comprehensively investigate linguistic differences between two corpora, such a narrow and scientific setup will rarely enable satisfactory exploration of the broader questions historians tend to be interested in. A historical corpus like this one must thus permit flexible and multivariate comparisons to tackle research questions from a variety of angles: to compare uses of keywords between parties, between election years, and between grassroots and national speakers (or any combination thereof) on demand. In this respect the number of natural subdivisions that occur in this corpus (two main corpora, two parties,

[73] Fairclough, *New Labour*, pp.165-166.

[74] P. Baker, '"The question is, how cruel is it?" Keywords, Fox Hunting, and the House of Commons', in Archer (eds.), *What's in a Word List?*, pp.125-26.

[75] Scott, 'Bad reference corpus', pp.80-81.

nine elections) is 36. A glance at Appendix B will show that this easily enables wide-ranging comparisons of keywords throughout. Thus, if the East Anglian Conservative reading for 'Imperialism' is the highest in the period in 1900, this finding has emerged not against a single comparator, but against as many as 35. It is thus extremely unlikely to be rogue, and instead to mean something significant that can feed valuably into analyses.

If we accept, then, that we have a viable corpus which can tell us something worthwhile about electoral language, the final question is perhaps the most fundamental: how will it actually be used? A glance at the appendices will show that all the important issues and ideas this dissertation explores are investigated via groups of selected lemmas – taxonomies – that correlate with the object of investigation. For example, for Imperialism, these are 'Empire', 'imperial', 'colony', Britain', and 'flag'.[76] For Tariff Reform, they are 'Tariff Reform', 'fiscal', 'duty', 'Colonial Preference', and 'Protection'.[77] This raises two important questions: first, how can we hope to represent potentially complex political issues and ideas through such small groups of keywords? Second, how can these taxonomy words be chosen so as to catch all language that is relevant, but also to avoid including that which is irrelevant?

Foucault famously argued that the entire frame of reference of language changes according to the precise lexicon and syntax, and many other linguists – perhaps most famously Chomsky – broadly share this view.[78] Mawdsley and Munck caution that historical source material 'can rely on detailed meanings, non-standard turns of phrase, shifts in the meaning of words, and other subjective factors' while Greenstein also concedes that the 'pursuit of objective results [and] verifiable models' has sometimes 'proved less than sympathetic to the ambiguity inherent within the historical record'.[79] However, the argument that keywords alone can be useful indicators of more complex issues and ideas in electoral language is strong: it is the very basis for the recent work of the political scientist Roderick Hart.[80] The argument is based on the rather obvious premise that when certain issues and ideas are being talked about in politics, certain words (perhaps the name of the issue, a group affected by it, the politician associated with it etc.) tend to accompany it. If we take the language of Imperialism, then an obvious correlating word is 'imperial' itself. The next step is to find other reliably correlating words and assemble a taxonomy of Imperialism that permits a more holistic measurement. When the taxonomy is used, all hits (i.e. occasions when the word appears) are then rechecked in their original contexts to ensure nothing is included incorrectly. Of course, no defined group of words could ever hope to represent *the entirety* of the language of Imperialism but they can still serve as a barometric tool with which we can measure – even if imperfectly – its prominence in speech.

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[76] See Appendix 4.10.

[77] See Appendix 5.5B.

[78] Johnson, 'Reflections', p.419.

[79] Mawdsley and Munck, *Computing for Historians*, p.182; Greenstein, *Historian's Guide*, p.28.

[80] See esp. Hart, *Campaign Talk*, pp. 23-45.

How, then, are these taxonomy words chosen? This requires care: to avoid what John Sinclair indentifies as one of the most common pitfalls with this kind of work: to 'leap ahead and group the crude words according to simple notions of meaning'.[81] Selecting the words is, for the most part, a matter of historical judgement. Having read the entirety of the corpus – and having manually studied passages of speech which deal with (for example) farming, temperance, or religion – I as the historian am best-placed to decide which words reliably correlate with these issues and ideas. And because the original context is always revisited through Keyword in Context (KWIC) analyses when the lemmas are counted, it is possible to filter out words which do not correlate as I suspected: e.g. when 'programme' refers to a theatre programme, or when 'class' refers to a group of schoolchildren. An example of this checking in action can be seen below for instances where 'land' was mentioned by Conservatives in East Anglia in 1880:

1. "If the landlord kept the game in his own hands you could only assess the land at what it was worth with the game upon it, and which you knew very often greatly depreciated its worth."
2. "I can only say that I still am of the opinion that, where the farmer has invested capital in the land he cultivates, he should not be turned out of his holding without having thoroughly got the benefit"
3. "I am the son of a large farmer who farms between 700 and 800 acres, and though he farms his own land and not that of other people, I consider that that gives me some idea of the wants of tenants."
4. "The moment a man bought an acre of land he would have to sell it again to pay his rates."
5. "…limited owners, and I may call them if they wish to sell any land, can only do so by sanction of the trustees."
6. "Look at Zulu-land at the present moment: peace now prevails and confidence has been restored."
7. "We must go through the length and breadth of the land and preach a crusade"

In the first five instances, 'land' clearly refers to physical land, whereas the final two are metaphorical or geographical. This process of checking makes it possible to separate different contexts in which the same word appears. This is important because it allows even ambiguous correlating words to be used reliably when they would otherwise have to be excluded. Overall, with careful design and built-in checks, taxonomies arguably represent the best available means of tracing important issues, themes, and ideas throughout the corpus.

V
Conclusion

The failures of past quantification in History have undoubtedly cast a long shadow. Projects like this one will inevitably be controversial, and face an uphill struggle to break into the mainstream. To a degree, this is probably for the best: new quantitative methodologies will not be accepted for their own sakes, but must powerfully demonstrate their utility. The degree to which this dissertation meets this

[81] Sinclair, *Corpus, Concordance, and Ccollocation*, p.41. See also Greenstein, *Historian's Guide*, p.28.

challenge can naturally be judged by the pages which follow. This chapter, however, has been concerned with making the theoretical case for corpora and highlighting the practical benefits they might bring to scholarship. It has argued that the language of electoral politics is potentially highly amenable to these methods if they are used carefully. Even basic comparative word frequencies have the potential to take us far when navigating a vast discourse which we still know remarkably little about, rendering even the basic chaff-sorter a powerful side-arm.[82] Simple, selective use of corpora might therefore improve scholarship by providing a test to fallible human intuition, more comprehensive evidencing, easier verifiability, and offer the opportunity to work more empirically.

The tone of this chapter has been one of cautious optimism. It does not argue that the dissertation that follows is necessarily a better way of researching the language of electoral politics, or that it can entirely avoid many of the shortcomings it has identified with traditional qualitative methodology. But it does argue that looking at the same evidence from both a quantitative and a qualitative angle, rather than just from one or the other, is beneficial even if one turns out to be less useful. That is why this study does not adopt a purely – or even largely – quantitative approach, and does not stray far from the feel of the original text and the story of electoral politics in East Anglia in these thirty years. Although this chapter has suggested that the Humanities have a good deal to learn from the Social Sciences, it is also equally willing to argue the reverse. Studies that analyse a corpus of newspaper reports of the BSE scares in 1995 and conclude that they 'are not about beef itself, but about the problems associated with eating beef' or those that use a corpus of Parliamentary debates to argue that the main opposition argument to the foxhunting ban of 2004 was that it might compromise British freedoms, are arguably simply using an elaborate method to state what would have been obvious to a Humanities scholar on reading a few samples of the text.[83] This further demonstrates that all academic disciplines can sometimes be unhelpfully ideological about their methodologies. This dissertation is not, therefore, simply a sales-pitch for corpus-driven numerical empiricism. It is an experiment in trying to combine the best of both worlds, using qualitative and quantitative techniques simultaneously to see where this will take us. And even a failed experiment can tell us a great deal.

[82] Fogel, 'Limits', p.341; Sculley and Pasanek, 'Meaning and Mining', p.411.

[83] Berber-Sardinha, 'Using Keywords', p.3; Baker, 'Keywords, Fox Hunting, and the House of Commons', p.128.

CHAPTER 2

The Impact of Reform

The General Elections of 1880 and 1885

I

Electoral Politics 1880-1885- An Overview

The General Election of March 1880 was fought under the cloud of a severe agricultural depression, and the dual strains of inflated income tax and recent imperial wars in Afghanistan and southern Africa.[1] In the absence of an overarching national question to match (for example) Home Rule in 1886 or Tariff Reform in 1906, Trevor Lloyd has argued that Gladstone successfully set the agenda in the constituencies to finance and foreign policy, whereas Disraeli's attempt to campaign on Irish Home Rule failed to fire popular excitement.[2] The result was a decisive Liberal victory: they registered 110 gains, securing 352 seats to the Conservatives' 237, and a Commons majority of 52.[3] It seemed to the Liberals that the electorate had rejected Disraeli's vague jingoism, and voted with rationality and common-sense against a profligate government which had failed to pass any meaningful domestic reform since 1876, preferring instead to fight adventurous, costly, and morally dubious wars overseas.[4] Jon Parry has described the campaign and the election result as 'a hymn to the rationality of the Liberal electorate'.[5]

In East Anglia, the results were somewhat atypical in that the Liberals failed to make the inroads into Tory rural strongholds that they managed in other parts of the country.[6] Two of the five double-member county divisions saw negligible electoral activity, with Conservatives Sir Thomas Thornhill and William Biddell, and Sir Edward Birkbeck and Sir E.H.K. Lacon, being returned unopposed for Suffolk Western and Norfolk Northern respectively. The other three county seats each saw a lone Liberal challenger from tenant farmers Robert Lacey Everett, Anthony Hamond, and Robert Gurdon in Suffolk Eastern, Norfolk Western, and Norfolk Southern respectively, but only the latter was successful (by a single vote). In the boroughs, however, the picture was quite different. In 1874, the popular mustard magnate J.J. Colman had been the only Liberal borough member (at Norwich) with the remaining eight constituencies falling to their opponents. In 1880, however, the Liberals managed to win five, with Jacob Tillett gaining the second Norwich seat, and the Birmingham caucusite Jesse Collings also securing one at Ipswich. At Bury St. Edmunds and King's

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[1] J. Parry, *The Rise and Fall of Liberal Government in Victorian Britain* (New Haven, 1993), p.277.

[2] T. Lloyd, *The General Election of 1880* (Oxford, 1968), pp.38-41.

[3] F. Craig, *British Electoral Facts 1832-1980* (Chichester, 1981), p.12.

[4] M. Pugh, *The Making of Modern British Politics* (Oxford,1985), p.66.

[5] Parry, *Rise and Fall*, p.279.

[6] Lloyd, *The General Election of 1880*, p.150.

Lynn, the Liberals also managed to wrest one seat from their opponents, with J.A. Hardcastle and Sir. W.H.B. Ffolkes being victorious. The overall result of 1880 was almost a carbon copy of that of 1868, with a continued Tory monopoly in the rural divisions, and a very even split in the boroughs, with most having their representations shared between the parties.

Five years later, the General Election of 1885 was fought under what Richard Shannon has described as 'the revised rules of engagement': namely the new electoral parameters established by the 1883-85 reforms.[7] These were the Corrupt and Illegal Practices Act of 1883, which forced parties to declare election expenses, and put limits on overall expenditure, the Third Reform Act of 1884, which extended the 1867 borough franchise to the counties, effectively giving the vote to agricultural labourers, and finally the Redistribution of Seats Act of 1885, which occasioned a shift towards more arithmetically equal, single member constituencies. The new system was described by Sir Henry Maine as 'unmoderated democracy', and created a government that Lord Acton declared to be 'the first of our democratic constitution'.[8] The sharp fall in uncontested returns and increased volume of platform speech reporting in newspapers pointed to a hitherto unparalleled level of popular excitement.[9] This new system – one that Joseph Chamberlain described as 'government of the people, by the people' – emboldened the radical figurehead to float his Unauthorized Programme before the country.[10] This placed state intervention, the condition of the poor, and the legitimacy of wealth and property prominently on the political agenda, where they were generally to remain.[11] The Liberals won 319 seats to the Conservatives' 249, with poor results in the boroughs counterbalanced by outstanding returns in the county divisions which had been altered most dramatically by reform. With the overwhelming support of the agricultural labourers, the Liberals won 80 of the 158 county seats (51%); a result they only bettered in the landslide of 1906.[12]

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[7] R. Shannon, *The Age of Salisbury, 1881-1902: Unionism and Empire* (London, 1996), p.76.

[8] Sir H. Maine, *Popular Government* (2nd ed., 1886), p. 92, cited in H Matthew, R. McKibbin and J. Kay, 'The Franchise Factor in the Rise of the Labour Party', *English Historical Review* (1976), p.724. Lord Acton cited in T. Jenkins, *The Liberal Ascendancy 1830-86* (Basingstoke, 1994), p.208, and H. Cunningham, *The Challenge of Democracy: Britain 1832-1918* (Harlow, 2001), p.121.

[9] The number of uncontested seats fell from 109 in 1880, to 43 in 1885. This total was the lowest in the nineteenth century, and was not bettered until 1924. See Craig, *British Electoral Facts*, p.158. For evidence of the big increase in reporting of political speeches in the press, see J. Meisel, *Public Speech and the Culture of Public Life in the Age of Gladstone* (New York, 2001), p.246, and esp. L. Blaxill. 'Electioneering, the Third Reform Act, and Political Change in the 1880s', *Parliamentary History* (2011), pp.360-2, 371-3.

[10] C. Howard, 'Joseph Chamberlain and the 'Unauthorized Programme', *English Historical Review* (1950), p.483; M. Barker, *Gladstone and Radicalism: the Reconstruction of Liberal Policy in Britain, 1885-94* (Hassocks, 1975), p.6.

[11] J. Chamberlain et-al, D. Hamer (ed.), *The Radical Programme: With 'The Future of the Radical Party' by T. Escott* (Brighton, 1971 [1885]), preface, p.v.

[12] P. Clarke and K. Langford, 'Hodges Politics: The Agricultural Labourers and the Third Reform Act in Suffolk' in N. Harte and R. Quinault (eds.) *Land and Society in Britain 1700-1914* (Manchester, 1996), pp. 119-36; P. Lynch, *The Liberal Party in Rural England 1885-1914* (Oxford, 2003), p.235.

East Anglia's electoral landscape was extensively remapped by redistribution. King's Lynn and Bury St. Edmunds lost their second member, Yarmouth was reinstated as a single member seat, and the boroughs of Eye and Sudbury were abolished. In the counties the five double-member seats were recast into eleven single-member divisions: Suffolk was allocated five, and Norfolk six.[13] The region's electorate more than doubled from 63,393 in 1880 to 152,980 in 1885. Each and every constituency was contested, and there were rapid developments in party organisation in the counties, and also an important (if rather less recognised) modernisation in the boroughs. The election also saw the sudden emergence of carpet bagger candidates (an increase from eight [27%] in 1880 to fifteen [43%] in 1885) and a greatly increased volume of speech reporting in the local press. Neither simply represented brief flashes in the storm of excitement following a major set of reforms, but were trends which were sustained thereafter.[14]

The East Anglian results in 1885 were dramatic, with the Liberals winning twelve of the eighteen seats, including nine of the eleven rural divisions, often by huge majorities. Many familiar faces who had dominated the region's politics like Sir R.J. Buxton, Lord Rendlesham, and Sir Thomas Thornhill were defeated, sometimes by relatively unknown Liberal carpet-baggers. It seemed that Hodge, despite the apparent belief in some quarters that he would deferentially follow his master to the poll, had instead used the vote to ignominiously eject him.[15] As the *Eastern Daily Press* remarked: 'Liberal candidates have won victories in counties where Liberalism has been at a discount for generations...it is impossible not to read its lesson: the labourers are Liberal'.[16]

I

Introduction

A good deal has been written on the elections of 1880 and 1885, and most of it focuses on the impact of the 1883-85 reforms.[17] This scholarship is limited, however, by its preoccupation with

[13] For Suffolk, these were: Suffolk Northern (Lowestoft), North-Eastern (Eye), North-Western (Stowmarket), South-Eastern (Woodbridge) and South-Western (Sudbury). For Norfolk, they were Norfolk North-West, North, East, South, South-West, and Mid. For a map of the constituency boundaries in the region, see H. Pelling, *Social Geography of British elections, 1885-1910* (London, 1967), pp.88-9.

[14] This paragraph draws heavily from Blaxill. 'Electioneering, the Third Reform Act, and Political Change in the 1880s'. See esp. pp. 347-50, 359-62.

[15] Clarke and Langford, 'Hodges Politics', p.121, 127, 131; Lynch, *Liberal Party*, pp.32-43.

[16] *Eastern Daily Press*, 4 and 5 Dec 1885.

[17] See for example J. Dunbabin, 'Some Implications of the 1885 British shift towards Single-Member Constituencies: A Note', *English Historical Review* (1994), pp.89-100; E. Jaggard, 'Political Continuity and Change in Late Nineteenth-century Cornwall', *Parliamentary History* (1992), pp.218-34; R. Davis, *Political Change and Continuity 1760-1885: A Buckinghamshire Study* (Newton Abbot, 1972); E. Feuchtwanger, *Disraeli, Democracy and the Tory Party* (Oxford,.1968); M. Pugh, *The Making of Modern British Politics*; R. Olney, *Rural Society and County Government in Nineteenth-century Lincolnshire* (Lincoln, 1973); J. Cornford, 'The Transformation of Conservatism in the late Nineteenth-Century', *Victorian Studies* (1963), pp.35-66.

developments in electioneering, and it generally places only minimal emphasis on language. Lloyd's study of 1880, and Alan Simon and C.H.D. Howard's articles on 1885, for example, contain very little engagement with speeches, being confined for the most part to odd quotations from national leaders like Gladstone or Chamberlain.[18] We must turn to recent local studies such as Lawrence's *Speaking for the People* and Lynch's *The Liberal Party in Rural England* to gain sharper analyses of the language of 1880 and 1885.[19] Unfortunately however, neither provide detailed examinations of the impact of reform: Lynch is prevented from making a comparison by starting in 1885 rather than 1880, and Lawrence is principally concerned with the borough of Wolverhampton which was unaffected (on paper) by either enfranchisement or redistribution. The historical debate on these two elections is thus rather underdeveloped. Historians (as will be shown) have advanced conflicting theories – on topics such as the impact of the Unauthorized Programme in 1885, the decline of the traditional language of the countryside, and the importance of the leadership of Gladstone and Disraeli – with only minimal engagement with each other. The fog surrounding the language of these two elections is thickened further by the absence of an aggregate quantitative survey of election addresses, as provided by Readman for 1895 and 1900, Russell for 1906, and Blewett for January and December 1910.[20]

This chapter aims to shed light on the impact of reform on electoral language by intervening in two important historiographical debates which concern these two general elections. The first is about the language of the countryside, and the extent to which the 1883-85 reforms meaningfully affected the supposedly distinctive character of political appeals in rural regions such as East Anglia. Two classic studies of the early 1970s – Davis' Buckinghamshire and Olney's Lincolnshire – suggest that the reforms (in particular the enfranchisement of the agricultural labourer) occasioned a rapid decline in the influence of agriculture, farming, and the aristocracy, but do not really explore this idea in detail, or consider its linguistic ramifications.[21] Surprisingly, this has not been further investigated by recent historians of political language, who have paid little attention to the idea that the 1883-85 reforms represented a watershed in rural political discourse. This is surely an oversight: in rural Suffolk for example, the 1880 electorate of 15,335 (mostly tenant farmers) swelled hugely to 55,184 with the addition of the agricultural labourers. The elective basis of rural Britain had been completely altered, with tenant farmers declining from the dominant voting class to a minority group. It would thus seem inevitable that there would have been some corresponding change or adaptation in the platform appeals of politicians in 1885, who were now soliciting completely different suffrages.

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[18] Lloyd, *The General Election of 1880*; Howard, 'Unauthorized Programme'; A. Simon, 'Church Disestablishment as a Factor in the General Election of 1885', *Historical Journal* (1975), pp.791-820.

[19] Lynch, *Liberal Party*, pp.22-50; J. Lawrence, *Speaking for the People: Party, Language and Popular Politics in England, 1867-1914* (Cambridge, 1997), pp.73-98, 163-93.

[20] A. Russell, *Liberal Landslide: the General Election of 1906* (Newton Abbot, 1973), pp.64-94; N. Blewett, *The Peers, the Parties and the People: the General Elections of 1910* (Bristol, 1972), pp. 209-22; P. Readman, 'The 1895 General Election and Political Change in late Victorian Britain', *Historical Journal* (1999), p.471, 475 and 'The Conservative Party, Patriotism, and British Politics: the case of the General Election of 1900', *Journal of British Studies* (2001), pp.114-16.

[21] Davis, *Political Change and Continuity 1760-1885*, p.220; Olney, *Rural Society*, p.168.

The political language of the countryside in the 1880s is a neglected topic because the majority of local studies for the late-Victorian period deal with urban areas.[22] Those which focus on rural constituencies are prevented from comparing 1880 with 1885 because they either finish beforehand or start afterwards.[23] However, despite the lack of specific comparisons between these elections, historians such as Howkins, Abbott, Howard, Readman, and Lynch have suggested that the 1883-85 reforms had a sizeable impact on language in the countryside, in particular because they facilitated the rise of popular discourses of rural radicalism.[24]

Of these historians, Readman and Lynch offer the most extensive analysis of speeches. Both argue that the post-reform countryside continued to inspire distinctive languages from both Liberal and Conservative platform speakers, in particular with regard to romantic and sentimental evocations of Britain's rural past, and idealised village communities.[25] Liberals could draw upon the popular memory of the pre-enclosure common land – over which a man could wander without fear of trespass – to add zest to their attacks on landed aristocrats who they perceived had stolen it long ago.[26] Conservatives, on the other hand, were more inclined to depict such radical cries as destabilizing influences on peaceful and harmonious village life centred around the eternal tripartite system of landlord, tenant farmer, and agricultural labourer.[27] While both historians are thus keen to stress the elements of continuities in rural political language, Readman also argues that the national campaign for radical Land Reform led by Chamberlain and Jesse Collings gained considerable traction in 1885, mainly because grassroots Liberals assumed it would appeal to their new labourer constituents. More subtly, he also argues that Conservatives were also gradually developing an agrarian patriotism which cast the agricultural labourer as a manly, independent, and property-owning class.[28] Lynch is more cautious, arguing that although appeals to labourers did dominate some rural Liberal campaigns in 1885, they were by no means widespread, mainly because many Liberals –- and most Conservatives – assumed that 'Hodge' would simply defer to the wishes of his landlord master, and that it was thus a waste of words to canvass him.[29] This argument was made more stridently by Michael Barker, who argues that the labourers 'could not pretend to be the decisive influence' and that Liberals gained most

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[22] These studies include A. Windscheffel, *Popular Conservatism in Imperial London, 1868-1906* (Woodbridge, 2007); M. Roberts, 'Villa Toryism and Popular Conservatism in Leeds, 1885-1902', *Historical Journal* (2006), pp. 217-46; Lawrence, *Speaking for the People*, pp.73-128.

[23] Studies of rural politics ending in 1880 or before include Olney, *Rural Society* and Jaggard, 'Political Continuity and Change in Cornwall'. Those starting in 1885 or later include Lynch, *Liberal Party*, and J. Howarth, 'The Liberal Revival in Northamptonshire, 1880-1895: A Case Study in late Nineteenth Century Elections', *Historical Journal*, (1969), pp.78-118.

[24] Lynch, *Liberal Party*, pp.24-31; 220, P. Readman, *Land and Nation in England: Patriotism, National Identity, and the Politics of the Land, 1880-1914* (Woodbridge, 2008), pp.143-8; B. Abbott, *Gladstone and Disraeli* (London 1972), p.82; Howard, 'Unauthorized Programme', p.477.

[25] Lynch, *Liberal Party*, pp.24-31, 220; Readman, *Land and Nation*, pp.140-80.

[26] Lynch, *Liberal Party*, pp.24-31, 220, Readman, *Land and Nation*, pp.143-8.

[27] Readman, *Land and Nation*, pp.162-65; Lynch, *Liberal Party*, p.156, 159, 161, 220.

[28] Readman, *Land and Nation*, p.141, 175.

[29] Lynch, *Liberal Party*, p.32, 34-6.

support by detaching the farmers from their traditional allegiance to Conservatism.[30] Lynch also goes on to stress that, in places where radicalism did emerge – such as in Holmfirth – it did so through the prism of popular traditions such as Luddism and Chartism to which the new voters felt a strong affinity.[31] So strong were these traditions, she argues, that rural electors transferred party loyalties freely, voting for whichever candidate best represented their fairly constant local concerns, and in 1885, this was overwhelmingly the Liberals.[32]

This situation invites a fundamental reassessment of the political language of the countryside in the late nineteenth century; to what extent there was a traditional rural rhetoric still in circulation in 1880 (and before), and if so, how and how far it was transformed by 1885. From this, we can begin to answer the question of whether or not it is actually helpful to think of rural politics as being as meaningfully distinct in the post-reform era as they were previously, and whether the sharp dichotomy between boroughs and counties implied by the historiography is actually a false one. A sensible place to begin is simply to ask ourselves exactly what we mean by 'the language of rural politics'. Exactly how important was (for example) farming, tenancy, crops, landlordism, and the agricultural depression to pre-reform political rhetoric? Once we shed light on this, we can then reasonably assess how and how far 1885 represented change, and the extent to which such change was due to the enfranchisement of the agricultural labourers.

This chapter's argument is that reform prompted a rapid and dramatic recasting of the basis of rural political language, with the agricultural labourer replacing the farmer at its epicentre with much greater speed than historians such as Lynch and Barker have contended. Parties neither viewed Hodge as apathetic or as automatically Liberal or Tory, but as a political class whose allegiance was yet to be won. On balance, this chapter contends that historians have underestimated the degree to which county candidates rapidly reformatted the tone and content of their appeals to fit the new conditions created by the 1883-85 reforms. In this respect, the contest of 1885 represented as large a transformation in the way rural elections were articulated as it did in the way they were fought. More broadly, the chapter also argues that although the new language of rural politics was still distinct from that of boroughs after 1885, that it was also less idiosyncratic than it had been in the past.

The second debate the chapter will touch upon concerns Joseph Chamberlain's Unauthorized Programme of 1885. This is both interrelated with, and a logical extension of, the first debate. Having argued that the centre of rural political discourse had shifted from farmer to labourer, the next step is to assess how and how far election issues were affected by the advent of this new linguistic environment. The Unauthorized Programme – which advocated Free Education, Land Reform, Church of England Disestablishment, graduated taxation, death duties, elected county government, manhood suffrage and payment of MPs – offered a new set of reform proposals, with the first three in particular being measures which would (in theory) directly affect the labouring classes of the countryside. The

[30] Barker, *Gladstone and Radicalism,* pp.35-7.

[31] Lynch, *Liberal Party*, pp. 25-31.

[32] Lynch, *Liberal Party*, pp.154-5.

specific question the chapter will address is whether the eclipse of the farmer by the labourer in rural politics gave the proposals greater purchase than historians have credited and, by extension, whether Chamberlain was actually in a stronger position in 1885 than previously assumed by the many scholars who have seen his programme – both as a radical agenda-setter and as a bid to eclipse rivals for the Liberal leadership – as a failure.[33]

The historiography surrounding the Unauthorized Programme is characterised by sharp disagreement over the power and influence of Chamberlain's proposals, and how and how far they set the agenda in constituency speaking campaigns in 1885. In some ways, it is difficult to assess the programme's impact because Chamberlain's position was far from clear; he vacillated in tone and stridency in the months preceding the election, mostly according to ebbs and flows in his turbulent relationships with other leading Liberals such as Gladstone, Hartington and Goschen.[34] At some points, he appeared to present his proposals as little short of a revolutionary programme for reinventing the nation, while at others, he dismissed the idea that they constituted a platform at all, being merely a set of general personal aspirations.[35] Writing in retrospect in 1891, however, he was inclined to remember his boldness above his timidity, fondly recalling 'the so-called "Unauthorized Programme" of 1885 on which about two-thirds of the Liberal Party fought the election'.[36]

A number of historians take the view that Chamberlain's programme was largely responsible for the astonishing Liberal gains in the counties, even though it was a manifesto whose inspiration, authorship, and intended target audience were all overwhelmingly urban.[37] Belchem and Marsh go as far as to suggest that its weaker impact on the boroughs – the lack of an 'urban cow' to graze beside her rural sister – was the chief reason the programme failed to arouse the kind of national working-class enthusiasm that would have given Chamberlain his mandate to claim the premiership and lead the

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[33] Howard, 'Unauthorized Programme', pp.477-91; Simon, 'Church Disestablishment', pp.791-820; Pugh, *The Making of Modern British Politics*, p.32; D. Hamer, *Liberal politics in the age of Gladstone and Rosebery: a study in leadership and policy* (Oxford, 1972), pp.100-101.

[34] Barker, *Gladstone and Radicalism*, pp.18-9, 27 and P Marsh, *Joseph Chamberlain: Entrepreneur in Politics* (London, 1994), p.209; For Chamberlain's recollection of the reception of his programme by his peers in the months proceeding the 1885 election, see J. Chamberlain, C. Howard (ed.), *A Political Memoir 1880-1892* (London, 1953), pp.108-35.

[35] In January at Birmingham, Chamberlain proclaimed that private property should pay 'a ransom' for the security it enjoyed, whereas a few days later at Ipswich, he backpeddled, claiming his proposals were 'no absolute platform' and were not designed even as a programme. See Marsh, *Entrepreneur*, pp.186-7; Barker, *Gladstone and Radicalism*, p.20, 22; Howard, 'Unauthorized Programme', p.480, 483.

[36] Chamberlain, *A Political Memoir*, p.110.

[37] Abbott, *Gladstone and Disraeli*, p.82; Howard, 'Unauthorized Programme', p.477. The intellectual genesis of the radical programme came from investigations into the plight of the urban poor in the East End of London (Andrew Mearns), Newcastle (Robert Spence Watson), and from Dilke's Royal Commission on the Housing of the Working Classes. Radicals expected the boroughs – their traditional strongholds – to carry the programme whose contents were designed first and foremost as a nostrum to urban, rather than rural ills. Chamberlain himself – despite influence from Jesse Collings – also had almost no experience of conditions of countryside, being first exposed to the conditions of the rural poor during a visit to Wiltshire in the Summer of 1885. See Barker, *Gladstone and Radicalism*, pp.7-8, 35-8.

Liberals from the left.[38] Readman and Howkins meanwhile, cite the importance of the promises of Land Reform in moving the general Liberal agenda further towards anti-landlordism, compulsory purchase, and ultimately redistribution of wealth.[39] Simon, in his article on the programme's effect in promoting the cause of Church Disestablishment, also agrees that Chamberlain succeeded in placing the religious question at the heart of the campaign, especially in heavily Nonconformist rural areas such as East Anglia, and Lynch acknowledges that the unauthorized proposals were part of the inspiration for sharp Liberal attacks on the landlords and Anglican clergy in the countryside.[40] Indeed, historians who have attempted to quantify the number of 'Chamberlainite' Liberal MPs returned in 1885 have placed the number as high as 160-180 out of the total of 335 (a growth of roughly one-third from 1880). This figure suggests that the programme was probably widely cited by Liberal speakers, and/or was electorally successful.[41]

There are, however, a larger number of historians who take the opposite view: that the Unauthorized Programme was no coup for Chamberlain, and that its specific proposals excited little enthusiasm.[42] Hamer contends that 'to many Liberals it [the programme] looked merely a rhetorical gloss on a basically unexciting set of reform policies' and Marsh argues that Chamberlain was 'dazed by the doubling of the electorate' and produced an ill-judged manifesto which 'repelled more voters than it attracted'.[43] Pelling, meanwhile, claims the labourer's seeming enthusiasm for Liberalism in 1885 was 'more out of fear of fiscal change, which might increase the cost of living, than because of any positive attraction of Chamberlain's social programme'.[44] These views are also shared by Adelman and Barker, and in Clarke and Langford's study of the agricultural labourers in 1885 in Suffolk, which also argue that Chamberlain enjoyed little success, and Collings' 'three acres and a cow' slogan was 'ridiculed by the Conservatives and disowned by Liberals'.[45] Indeed, Parry and Self also contend that the programme was in fact more successful in firing enthusiasm on the other side, energising moderate and conservative opinion, especially in defence of Church and property.[46] These ascriptions of failure to the radical programme are made despite the general acknowledgement that the tone and content of the 1885 campaign were significantly more radical than that of 1880.

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[38] J. Belchem, *Class, party and the political system in Britain, 1867-1914* (Oxford, 1990), p.39; Marsh, *Entrepreneur*, pp.212-3.

[39] Readman, *Land and Nation*, pp.47-8; A. Howkins, 'From diggers to dongas: the land in English radicalism, 1649-2000', *History Workshop Journal* (2002), pp.13-14.

[40] Simon, 'Church Disestablishment', pp.802-9; Lynch, *Liberal Party*, p.36.

[41] Pugh, *The Making of Modern British Politics*, p.32, Barker, *Gladstone and Radicalism*, p.24.

[42] P. Adelman, *Gladstone, Disraeli and later Victorian Politics* (Harlow, 1983) p.54; Hamer, *Liberal Politics*, p.104; Pelling, *Social Geography*, p.16.

[43] Hamer, *Liberal politics*, p.104; Marsh, *Entrepreneur*, p.185.

[44] Pelling, *Social Geography*, p.16.

[45] Adelman, *Gladstone, Disraeli and later Victorian politics*, p.54, Barker, *Gladstone and Radicalism*, pp.35-6, Clarke and Langford, 'Hodges Politics', pp.130-31.

[46] Parry, *Rise and Fall* p.289, R. Self, *The Evolution of the British Party System 1885-1940* (Harlow, 2000), p.56.

Indeed, it is striking that even those historians who credit the programme with firing major enthusiasm in the countryside do not – even in the face of the outstanding Liberal gains – credit this particularly to Chamberlain himself. Readman and Howkins cite the importance of specific proposals of Land Reform articulated by allies such as Jesse Collings and Joseph Arch, rather than Chamberlain's charismatic leadership, his programme, or his general radical vision.[47] Lynch, even though she argues that the 1885 election pushed rural Liberalism to the left, sees this as a grassroots process which depended on constituency traditions and the differing approaches of Liberal candidates, rather than being due to external influences from Birmingham.[48] Parry – although he acknowledges the force of the attack on traditional Liberalism from 1885 – is also inclined to dismiss Chamberlain as a storm in a teacup because his municipal socialism (which was seen as ad hoc, compulsory, and confiscatory) was at odds with the thinking of traditional Liberal radicals like Bright who belonged to the party's moralistic-economy wing.[49] Overall, although historians disagree on how far the programme filtered into constituency speaking campaigns, and the success it achieved, they are united by being remarkably sparing in their attribution of credit to Chamberlain, and generally view his position in the immediate aftermath of the election as being weaker than it was before.

This chapter's contribution to this debate will be to use the corpus to paint a quantitative picture of the impact of the Unauthorized Programme on electoral language. This picture will allow us to more clearly gauge whether radicalism was unusually dominant in 1885, and if so, whether this rise can be clearly linked with the unauthorized proposals, the enfranchisement of Hodge, or both. This will enable us judge the strength of Chamberlain's national position in 1885, and whether he really had gone some way to winning the hearts and minds of grassroots Liberals. Finally, and following on from this chapter's first point on the impact of reform on rural language, it is also interesting to investigate whether the programme had a stronger impact on East Anglian counties than boroughs.

The chapter argues that historians who dismiss the programme as a failure, and even those who view its impact as mixed, are perhaps taking Chamberlain's pessimism at the national result a little too literally. His writings, his continuing disagreements with high profile Liberals, and especially his defection from the party within six months all make it easy to underestimate just how strong he really was in the aftermath of the 1885 election. He may have ended up with a different power-base than he anticipated, and failed to smash the whigs conclusively in one contest, but the fact that he fell short of his own wildly optimistic predictions should not disguise the impact he did achieve. His proposals of Land Reform, Church of England Disestablishment, and Free Education were the sparks which ignited the campaign in East Anglia, and on the national stage; they dominated the platform, fired passions on both sides, and initiated realignments in the Liberal and Conservative parties that helped frame political identities in the post reform-era. Many East Anglian Liberals still championed

[47] A. Howkins, *Poor labouring men: rural radicalism in Norfolk, 1872-1923* (1985), pp.57-61, 74-5; P. Readman, 'Jesse Collings and Land Reform, 1886-1914' *Historical Research (2008)*, pp. 292-314.

[48] Lynch, *Liberal Party*, pp.22-50.

[49] Parry, *Rise and Fall*, p.288.

Chamberlain's proposals for years afterwards and in general were more inclined to support a brand of politics which was more avowedly programmatic and open to ideas of compulsion, confiscation, and intervention to cure social ills. Conservatives also developed a counter-narrative to the new radicalism where they stressed their role as progressives and as better reformers than the Liberals. While they opposed radical Land Reform, Free Education, and Church Disestablishment, they made it clear that they were not averse to reform in general. It may have been this moderate realignment that made them such unexpectedly easy new bedfellows for disgruntled Liberal defectors just six months later in 1886. On the face of it, the result of the election of 1885 ended up counting for little because the new and potentially radical Parliament which might have gone on to define post-reform politics over the next six years instead lasted only six months. In this respect, it might have been Gladstone's conversion to Irish Home Rule rather than Chamberlain's supposed failure in 1885 which did most to knock the wind from the sails of radicalism for the next two decades.

III

The Political Language of the Countryside

What might constitute the traditional language of the pre-reform countryside? What issues mattered in the rural divisions? Historians highlight one in particular: farming. In 1880, Lloyd, Feutchwanger and Barker cite the agricultural depression as the key reason for the poor Conservative performance in the counties, and the Government's failure of take remedial action.[50] According to Feutchwanger, Liberals exploited their failure to repeal the Malt Tax, tensions over the Game Laws, and ran a mild anti-landlord campaign by championing compensation for unexhausted improvements, and cheaper and easier land transfer. For J.R. Fisher, the tenant farmers were also the group which swung most heavily away from the Conservatives, so much so that the secretary of the Farmer's Alliance – which endorsed 61 Liberal Candidates – called the result 'a revolt in the counties'.[51] The first task, therefore, is to use the East Anglian corpus to investigate the language of farming in 1880 with a five-word taxonomy. The full results can be found in Appendix 2.2, but the scores (for both parties added together) are reproduced as Figure 2.1 below:

[50] Feuchtwanger, *Disraeli, Democracy and the Tory Party,* pp. 88-89; Lloyd, *The General Election of 1880*, p.60, Barker, *Gladstone and Radicalism*, p. 36.

[51] J. Fisher, 'The Farmers' Alliance: An Agricultural Protest Movement of the 1880's', *Agricultural History Review*, no.26, (1978), pp 17-18; W. Bear, 'The Revolt of the Counties', *Fortnightly Review*, XXXII (May 1880), pp.720-5.

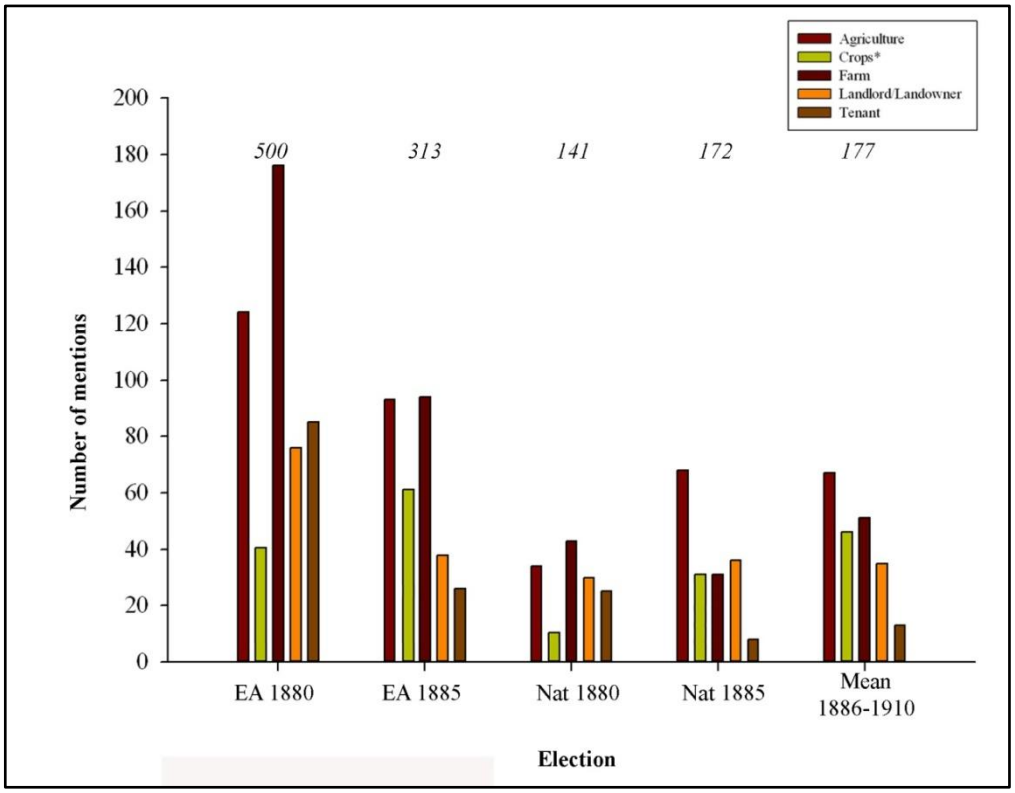

Figure 2.1: Farming, 1880-1910.

The combined score for all five keywords for each election is shown at the top in italics. See Appendix 2.2.

**Includes 'crops', 'corn', 'wheat', 'barley', 'malt', 'potato'.*

Figure 2.1 clearly suggests that farming loomed particularly large in East Anglia in 1880. The lemma 'agriculture' is at its peak, with 124 hits (made up of 56 mentions by Conservatives and 68 by Liberals), well ahead of 1885 (93) and the seven other elections in the period (67). The picture for 'farm', 'tenant', and 'landlord' is also very similar. 'Crops' (a group consisting of the lemmas 'crops', 'corn', 'wheat', 'barley', 'malt', and 'potato') are mentioned slightly more in 1885, but this seems to be because a disproportionate percentage (60%) of contested East Anglian divisions were boroughs in 1880; if county constituencies are taken alone, the 1880 score is actually 80% higher than it was in 1885.[52] Overall, the aggregate reading of 500 for all five farming keywords in 1880 is easily greater than for 1885 (313) and the average for 1886-1910 (177). The preponderance of farmer's issues in the campaign is also demonstrated by the prominence of the Malt Tax and the Game Laws, which were more than twice as mentioned as in 1885 (see Appendix 2.1). Finally, the graph also demonstrates that farmer's issues were much more prominent in East Anglia than they were on the national stage, despite the long shadow cast by the agricultural depression across the country.

While this is interesting, we need to compare farming to the other important issues of 1880 to better situate it in the wider context of the East Anglian campaign. An equivalent five-word taxonomy of finance – which Lloyd highlights as the central issue of the contest – totals 374 hits (see Appendix

[52] Readings from counties alone are 133 in 1880, and 74 in 1885 (weighted to 50,000 word ratios per party).

2.4).[53] For foreign policy, the taxonomy totals 652 (see Appendix 2.5). Farming's aggregate of 500 mentions thus lies roughly in-between the two, suggesting that it was also a hugely important election issue. Unsurprisingly, it was far more widely mentioned in East Anglia: on the national stage, the farming taxonomy scores just 141 mentions, trailing finance (208) and foreign policy (535). Moreover, if four of the ten East Anglian county seats had not been left uncontested in 1880, it is likely that the relative visibility of farming in the regional speaking campaign would have been higher still.

The centrality of farming to the 1880 electorate is also well-demonstrated by the tone of the speeches themselves, where the issue seemed to arouse considerable excitement. Hammond (West Norfolk) talked of the 'farmers of Norfolk, amongst whom we lived, not merely on terms of acquaintance, but on terms of friendship', and promised to 'serve both as their member for Parliament and as their master of the hounds'.[54] In East Suffolk, Everett told his audience that '[if] you wish to see your brother farmers are in earnest and wish to see your brother farmers safe…vote for me'.[55] In fact, it seemed to be the presumption that members for the counties were returned primarily to represent the bi-partisan agricultural interest above party. Thornhill (West Suffolk) remarked that 'any measure for the benefit of the agricultural community, whether emanating from Whig or Tory, would receive his support…in doing so he should be acting for the benefit of the country, which could not long continue prosperous unless agriculture was prosperous also' while his running partner Biddell stated that 'with regard to agriculture, he had himself felt the depression. He was not sanguine of being able to do much, but he promised to bestow a watchful attention upon all matters relating to agriculture'.[56] The best example of all, though, was the sharp attack on C.S. Read in South Norfolk, where his supposed want of independence from the Tory whip became the principal issue of the campaign, and prompted Read to issue a special four-thousand word printed 'Defence' to the electors of the division to explain why he was 'a farmer first and a Tory second'.[57]

If the language of farming was so critical in East Anglia, it would be interesting to see whether it was an issue of regional significance, or was simply concentrated in county divisions. I have constructed special separate corpora for boroughs and counties for 1880 and 1885,and this reveals that 89% of the five farming taxonomy keywords were mentioned in the county speaking campaigns, with 11% in the boroughs.[58] While we would expect counties to dominate, these figures do not suggest that farmer's issues were entirely forgotten in the towns, and the 143 mentions (which made up the 11%)

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[53] Lloyd, *The General Election of 1880*, pp.38-9.

[54] *Lynn Advertiser*, 20 Mar 1880; *Norwich Mercury*, 17 Mar 1880.

[55] *Suffolk Chronicle*, 27 Mar 1880.

[56] *Suffolk Chronicle*, 27 Mar 1880.

[57] *Norwich Mercury*, 31 Mar 1880.

[58] These special borough and county corpora are compiled both from the main East Anglian corpus, but also contain other speeches that I did not have space to include. This enabled a much bigger sample of language to be taken: sufficient (in most cases) to get freestanding 50,000 word samples for boroughs and counties separately. These special corpora are therefore not precisely weighted to constituency ratios (although they are still quite close to being so: no one constituency's word-count is overrepresented by more than 10%).

still compares favourably to Ireland, for example, which was mentioned just 37 times in the same corpus. Indeed, Jacob Tillett at Norwich claimed that 'they of the county were bound together in a common interest (Hear, hear.) If agriculture is depressed, we are depressed, the shopkeepers of Norwich are depressed, and so are the industries of Norwich'.[59] This indicates that farming was also of notable (if lesser) significance in boroughs, and was an issue of regional, not merely rural significance.

On the other hand, could it not simply be argued that farming was a key issue in East Anglia in 1880 simply because of the depression, and was thus only of transitory, rather than permanent importance? Certainly, speakers often complained that agriculture was in depression. Everett remarked that 'This year the crops had been blighted, and the farmer had not enough in many cases to pay the landlord and nothing…to pay the tithe owner, and nothing left for themselves' while Amherst (South-West Norfolk) commented that 'I am afraid to talk about agricultural profile in these times of depression, which we all feel very deeply'.[60] However, these complaints were not confined to agriculture: West (Ipswich), who was a practicing barrister, complained that 'my interest has suffered more during that depression, and consequent distress, than the agricultural interest' and Gurdon acknowledged that the downturn was 'affecting every class and every interest'.[61] Moreover, agriculture was in depression through most of the late nineteenth century: in 1895 Conservative candidates for Eye and Woodbridge spoke of the 'terrible depression in farming' and the 'depression which hangs over the agricultural interest', and in 1900, a Norwich speaker celebrated Salisbury's action to alleviate 'the depressed interests of agriculture by reducing the rates on agricultural land…a “dole” to agriculture.'[62] Indeed, the general gloomy feeling which hung over the agricultural interest in this period was well-summarised by the Mid-Norfolk Liberal candidate in 1886 who remarked that 'For the last eight or ten years agriculture has been in a very depressed state. That is ancient history now'.[63]

We therefore should not view 1880 as an election where farming was important because of the depression. The unhappy climate framed the whole period, and cast a pall over allusions to agriculture in 1900 just as much as in 1880. It therefore seems more likely that farming was not so much a transitory election issue, but simply reflected the dominant electoral paradigm of the pre-reform countryside which possessed a predominantly farmer-based franchise. It was arguably this, rather than the depression, which influenced candidates to talk continuously about farming. Indeed, the warm allusions to 'brother farmers' of 1880 were also present in the previous election of 1874.[64] This point

[59] *Eastern Daily Press*, 20 Mar 1880.

[60] *Suffolk Chronicle*, 27 Mar 1880; *Lynn Advertiser*, 6 Mar 1880.

[61] *East Anglian Daily Times*, 24 Mar 1880; *Eastern Daily Press*, 27 Mar 1880.

[62] *Ipswich Journal*, 20 Jul 1895 (Eye and Woodbridge); *Norwich Argus*, Oct 6 1900.

[63] *Eastern Daily Press*, 16 Jun 1886.

[64] Viscount Mahon (Conservative, East Suffolk) referred to 'the real battle' as being 'between the landed interest and the commercial interest…you, gentlemen, represent the agricultural interest' while the chairman of a Suffolk meeting referred to 'that great and important interest which I see so well represented on the present occasion…the agricultural interest. (Much cheering.)'. Both quotations could reasonably be taken to imply that farmers comprised an important (maybe even dominant) portion of the audience. See *Ipswich Journal*, 5 Feb 1874 for both references.

can be illustrated more powerfully by comparing the language of farming in 1880 to 1874 (and even 1835) using special corpora for these older contests, once again using the five-word farming taxonomy.[65] The results (again, for both parties) are shown in Figure 2.2 below:

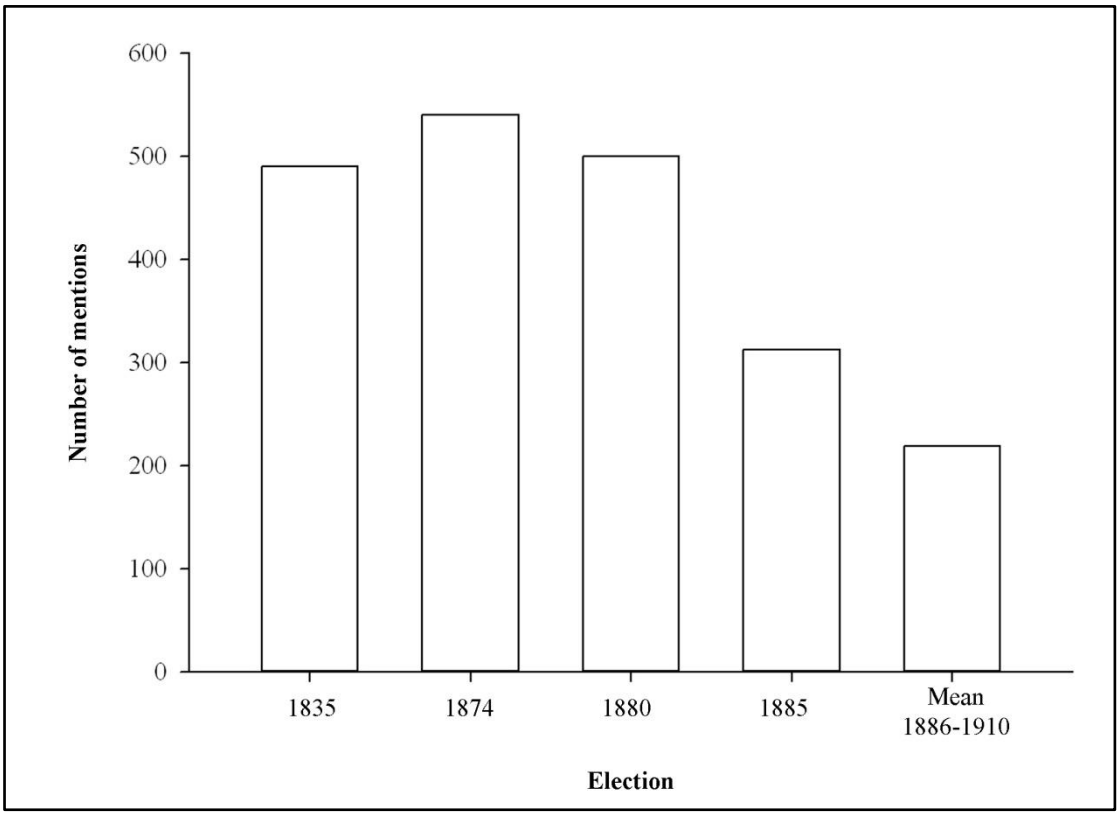

Figure 2.2: Farming in East Anglia, 1835-1910

Figure 2.2 shows that, in 1874, the farming keywords were mentioned a combined total of 540 times by both parties: a very similar reading to the 500 we saw for 1880.[66] Perhaps still more strikingly, the

[65] Although the corpus begins in 1880, it is helpful to be able to look back further. I have thus compiled East Anglian corpora for 1874 and 1835. These elections were chosen mainly by the availability of sources, but also in order to supply one reference point from the recent past, and one more distinct one from the years following the Great Reform Act. Speeches were taken from the British Library Nineteenth Century Newspapers Collection, from the *Ipswich Journal*, *The Bury and Norwich Post*, and *The Essex and South Suffolk News*. It was not possible to weight proportionally by constituency, but both corpora contain roughly equal proportions of speech from boroughs and counties, and from both parties. Each is about 35,000 words in size, but is weighted so as to be comparable to the main corpus readings. The smaller size and lack of constituency weighting means they are less representative than the main East Anglian corpus, but they can still be used to make interesting comparisons if treated carefully.

score for 1835 (490) is also very similar.[67] These three pre-reform scores are well ahead of 1885 (313) and the average score for the remainder of the 1886-1910 period (212). We can thus reasonably conclude that the preponderance of farming in rural discourse in 1880 represented the continuation of a long-standing tradition rather than a passing period of excitement. Indeed, while rural political life was by no means insulated from the ebb and flow of the national political mood (as demonstrated by the visibility of foreign policy in 1880) it was likely that the county election agenda would *always* revolve around farming while farmers comprised the dominant electoral class. In this respect, Olney and Davis are perhaps by no means wide of the mark to suggest that rural politics had not changed fundamentally in the fifty years since 1832.[68] There was thus nothing automatic about the modernisation of politics; while tenant farmers continued to dominate the county franchise, it seemed unlikely that the basis of rural electoral language would change.

While this finding is interesting in itself, it also forms an important backdrop for a discussion of still greater historiographical importance: on the impact of reform, and (in particular) the enfranchisement of the agricultural labourer, the man upon 'whom all eyes rested in 1885'.[69] Lynch has argued that this contest was central in giving birth to a new radical Liberalism which would go on to dominate rural politics. In particular, she argues that the fiery contributions from labourers at meetings in Holmfirth and North Essex took contemporaries – who had expected them to be deferential – by almost complete surprise.[70] In South Oxfordshire the labourers were less vocal, and without this rude awakening, the Liberal Party 'approached the 1885 campaign in much the same way as they had in previous elections [with] farmers, and landowners…the voters of principal influence'.[71] According to Lynch, this rather blasé attitude was shared by Liberal elites in general, and also by Conservatives, and neither initially took much notice of the labourers until they realised they were not deferential after all.[72]

The corpus suggests that Lynch's reading is at fault on both counts. Firstly, it does not take into account the sharp decline (almost 40%, according to Figure 2.2) in the visibility of farming in 1885 relative to the pre-reform levels. More substantially, she also surely underestimates the impact of the agricultural labourer. Using another five-word taxonomy for agricultural labourer's issues

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[66] The 1874 totals for the language of farming are: 'agriculture': 114; 'farm': 122; 'crops': 70; 'landlord': 62; 'tenant': 86. Total: 540.

[67] Scores for 1835 are: 'agriculture': 164; 'Farm': 144; 'crops': 138; 'landlord': 30; 'tenant': 14. Total: 490. Crops are mentioned more often here than in 1874 or 1880, mostly due to the high visibility of corn, generally in connection with the Corn Laws. 'Landlord' and 'tenant' are generally much lower, however, although 'agriculture' and 'farm' are consistent.

[68] Olney, *Rural Society*, pp.145-68; Davis, *Political Change and Continuity*, pp.198-220. See also H. J. Hanham, *Elections and party management: politics in the time of Disraeli and Gladstone* (London, 1959), pp.3-28.

[69] Hamer, *Liberal Politics*, p.102.

[70] Lynch, *Liberal Party*, p.32. This view is also shared by Clarke and Langford, 'Hodges Politics', p.121.

[71] Lynch, *Liberal Party*, p.32, 36-7, 45.

[72] Lynch, *Liberal Party*, p.32, 38, 46.

('allotments', 'cottage', 'labourer', 'food', and 'land' (in the context of Land Reform) Figure 2.3 below shows a huge increase compared to 1880 and before:

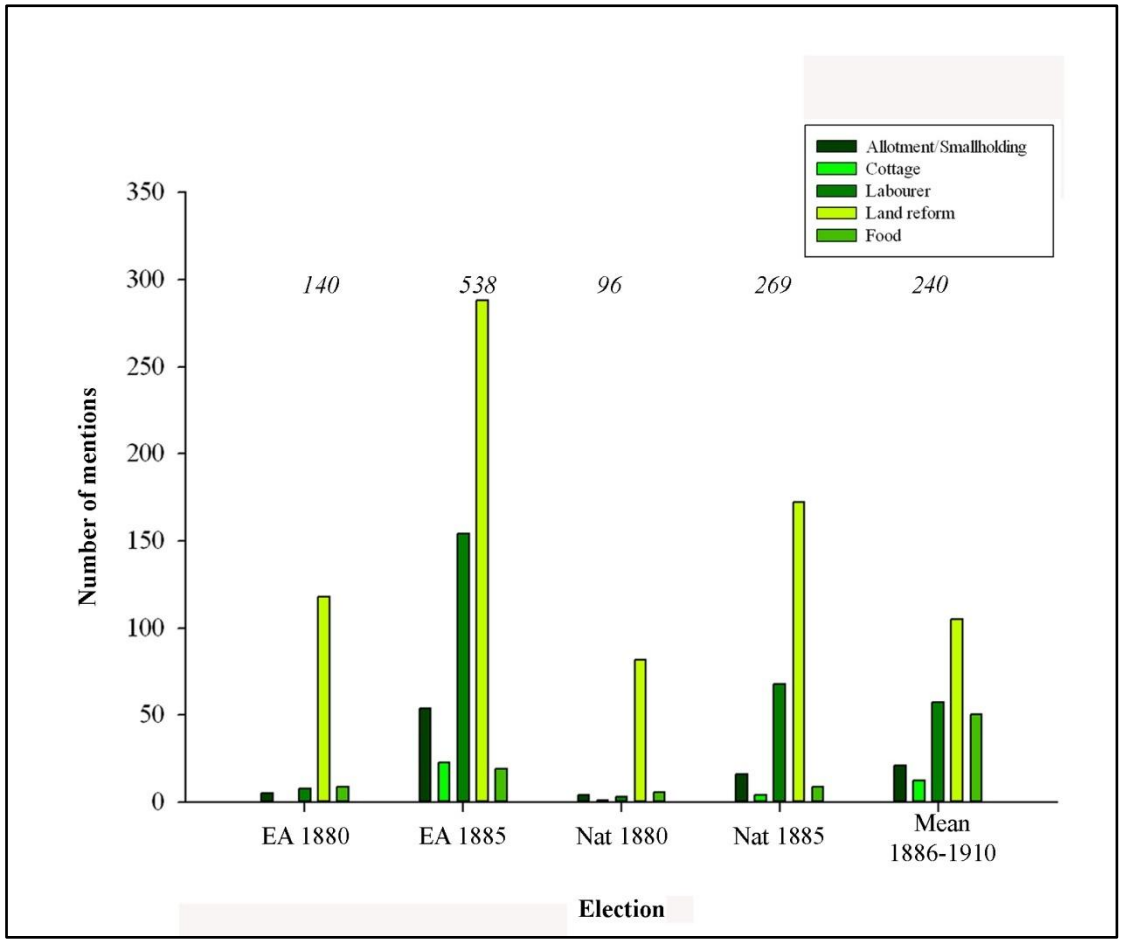

Figure 2.3: Agricultural Labourers' Issues, 1880-1910.

The combined score for all five keywords for each election is shown at the top in italics. See Appendix 2.3.

Figure 2.3 shows that the visibility of agricultural labourer's issues nearly quadrupled between 1880 and 1885, moving from 140 to 538 aggregate mentions. Indeed, these scores increase almost as dramatically on the national stage: from 96 in 1880 to 269 in 1885. This suggests that the enfranchisement of Hodge prompted a quite dramatic recasting of the language of the countryside, where issues of particular concern to him – such as housing, food, and allotments – more than quadrupled in frequency, and replaced the old language of tenant farming which (as we have seen) saw a 40% decline. Indeed, although 1885 marked the peak of the dominance of the agricultural labourer in East Anglian political discourse, the change was to a large degree sustained: the average scores for the next seven elections jumps to 240. The language of farming, however, continued to decline further after 1886 (as Figure 2.1 shows), thus ensuring Hodge continued to overshadow his employer.

Contemporaries were certainly conscious of this change. *The East Anglian Daily Times* declared that 'the labourer, having got the vote, is now as good a man as his master'.[73] Liberals in particular went out of their way to address him. Gurdon 'was anxious that the new voters should prove that they should have the same privileges as the influential farmers…had had for years'.[74] Many of his more radical colleagues went further: Collings told the labourers to use 'that great weapon of self-interest and self-guarding which had been placed in their hands' and an East Norfolk speaker claimed that 'the labourer now read newspapers…the days when he could be cajoled by occasional doles of broth and blankets were over'.[75] The tables had turned so much that Tillett proudly described a county meeting where 'farmers continually created a disturbance...the labourers told them to be quiet…and turned their masters out'.[76]

The Conservatives also fought hard to gain Hodge's support. Of the 538 mentions of labourers' issues in 1885, 55% in fact came from them: they mentioned labourers, cottages, Land Reform, and food more than their opponents.[77] The tone of their appeal, as might be expected, was the antithesis of that of the radicals'. Hunter-Rodwell (Eye) complained of Liberal attempts to 'make out that the landlords and the farmers had been the enemies of the labouring class (shame)…he always maintained that the interests of the landlord, the farmer, the tenant, and the labourer were all bound up together'.[78] Thornhill (Stowmarket) congratulated himself as a good landlord, remarking that 'on his own property the labourers had a good cottage and garden, for which they paid 1s. a week, and he did not think that was too much', and Lord Rendlesham made an almost identical boast.[79] Conservatives took particular umbrage to Collings' famous 'three acres and a cow' slogan, mentioning 'cow' three times as often as Liberals, and invariably in the context of extreme sarcasm: Amherst pointed out that 'while there were 56,000 labourers in this county there were perhaps only 26,000 cows, so they could only have half a cow each'.[80] It does not seem, therefore, that the Conservatives were any less prepared for the advent of a labourer-based county franchise than the Liberals were. Their tone was different, but they still seemed to be trying hard to assimilate Hodge into the community and traditions of rural politics rather than encouraging him to smash it as radical Liberals like Collings were doing. Indeed, these communitarian attitudes were later embodied by Lord Winchelsea's National Agricultural Union in the

[73] *East Anglian Daily Times,* 1 Dec 1885.

[74] *Eastern Daily Press,* 1 Dec 1885.

[75] *East Anglian Daily Times,* 19 Nov 1885; *Eastern Daily Press,* 12 Nov 1885.

[76] *Eastern Daily Press,* 10 Nov 1885.

[77] See Appendix 2.3.

[78] *Ipswich Journal,* 26 Sept 1885.

[79] *Ipswich Journal,* 26 Sept 1885.

[80] *Norwich Argus,* 10 Nov 1885. 'Cow' was mentioned 14 times by Conservatives in 1885, and 12 of those occasions were greeted with laughter. All the occasions 'cow' was mentioned by Liberals were defensive.

1890s, which tried to unite landlord, farmer, and labourer behind a modest common legislative programme.[81]

Overall, the qualitative and quantitative evidence from East Anglia suggests that Lynch has underestimated the extent to which whiggish Liberals, and Conservatives, adapted strikingly quickly to the new conditions and willingly supplanted the tenant farmer with the labourer. Moreover, this finding also casts doubt on Lynch and Clarke and Langford's assessment that contemporaries viewed the labourer as deferential, and so thus not worth canvassing through platform speech.[82] On the face of it, this seems difficult to believe: the 1870s had seen widespread labourers' agitations and the formation of the National Agricultural Labourer's Union.[83] It is also hardly consistent with the writings of leading Conservatives on the Third Reform Act: Salisbury and Northcote in particular were exceedingly pessimistic on the probable radicalism of the new rural voters.[84] Indeed, in North-West Norfolk, Joseph Arch had arranged for 80 mock ballot papers to be created in advance of the election so agricultural labourers could practice voting: when they were counted, only two had voted Conservative.[85] In the Ipswich municipal elections – held a month prior to the national poll – a progressive candidate confidently predicted that 'every agricultural labourer who was not influenced, intimidated, or unable to go to the poll would vote Liberal' and a moderate complained that 'the agricultural labourers had been got hold of by those Radical liars and he was very much afraid that [they] would go Radical'.[86]

For others, the agricultural labourer was simply an unknown quantity. *The East Anglian Daily Times* described them as 'yet to be won', while *The Eastern Daily Press* remarked that Hodge was attending political meetings 'not for the purpose of agreeing with [the] speakers…but for the purpose of weighing them, thinking over them, and then making a decision when called upon to do so'.[87] Lord Rendlesham, who in 1874 was sufficiently confident of his electors' familiarity with his political views to decline a chairman's offer to make a public speech, now felt the need to hold a special meeting whose object, according to the chairman, was 'for Lord Rendlesham to state his political views...this was not necessary in previous elections because a candidate could go round and see many constituents – but as the electorate is so largely increased, a candidate can only make his views known at public gatherings'.[88] Private party correspondence also makes plain that Conservatives believed they had to

[81] P. Readman, 'Conservatives and the Politics of Land: Lord Winchilsea's National Agricultural Union, 1893–1901', *English Historical Review* (2006), pp.25-69.

[82] Lynch, *Liberal Party*, p.32, Clarke and Langford, 'Hodges Politics', p.121.

[83] Howkins, *Poor Labouring Men*, pp.15-38, 57-79.

[84] J. France, 'Salisbury and the Unionist Alliance', in R. Blake and H. Cecil (eds.), *Salisbury: the man and his policies* (Basingstoke, 1987), pp.220-34; Shannon, *Age of Salisbury*, p.171, 182.

[85] Shannon, *Age of Salisbury*, p.179.

[86] *East Anglian Daily Times*, 1 Nov 1885, 3 Nov 1885.

[87] *East Anglian Daily Times*, 2 Nov 1885; *Eastern Daily Press*, 6 Nov 1885. A Suffolk Liberal magazine was also uncertain, advising canvassers that 'We must make every effort to ensure Hodge polls for the Liberals'. See *Ipswich Advance*, Oct. 1885.

[88] *Ipswich Journal*, 14 Nov 1885.

specially appeal to labourers in order to survive: a South-West Norfolk agent warned in July that 'the Liberals are gaining the favour of the agricultural electors' and warned that 'Amherst's seat will not be worth a dog's purchase' unless the party held meetings in each village and adopted a 'paid labourers' agent who can take talk to the labouring class in their own language'.[89]

Neither contemporary diagnosis of the labourer's politics – as radical or as undecided – suggest that any significant branch of mainstream Liberal or Conservative opinion really believed that Hodge would simply follow his master to the poll. If politicians had still believed it when they mounted the platform in 1885, it seems hard to believe they would have suddenly made an apathetic and deferential group of voters the main target of their speeches, especially at the exclusion of the farmers. Instead, it seems parties were acutely aware that Hodge would possess both an interest in politics and his own political (although not necessarily *party*) identity. Whether they liked it or not, the man who (according to an 1874 Ipswich Conservative) 'drives a muck cart…follows a plough, who does not know the distinction between a Whig and a Tory, and who can neither read, write, nor spell the word' was the new master of rural politics.[90] The traditions of the past may have remained important in rural politics, but the 1885 campaign showed both parties were prepared to reinvent their platforms remarkably quickly to appeal to the new voters. For Readman, this reflected an emerging idea of the 'national good', where party language became less saturated in historical and local allusions, and more avowedly populist, democratic, and national.[91] Indeed, it seems unlikely that the new generation of carpet-bagger politicians who began to be parachuted into East Anglia from 1885 – partisan party men who most likely lacked direct understanding of the region or village life – were ever going to speak the same political language as their predecessors.[92]

Overall, both Lynch and Readman are right to re-stress the critical importance of changes in the basis of rural rhetoric after 1885, but this chapter is inclined to push their conclusions further still. It was neither a gradual change, nor one confined to the rhetoric of a minority of radical Liberals, but a root and branch recasting and reinterpretation of the basis of electoral language in the countryside. As such, this change was perhaps just as important as the organisational developments which accompanied it. Standing on the threshold of the new rural politics of 1885, both parties had a historic opportunity: the Liberals could capitalise on what many believed represented an opportunity to dominate parts of the country where the party was historically weak, and the Conservatives were equally quick to recognise the need to appeal to the labourers before they defaulted to radicalism. The basis and parameters of rural politics had evolved, and the stage was now set for new content.

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[89] Roger Mickleford to Lord Walsingham 11 Jun 1885, Norwich Record Office ref: WLSLX/43-44.

[90] *Suffolk Chronicle*, 31 Jan 1874.

[91] Readman, *Land and Nation*, p.180.

[92] Blaxill, 'Electioneering, the Third Reform Act, and Political Change', p.350.

II

The Unauthorized Programme

Joseph Chamberlain's Unauthorized Programme was an attempt to offer something new to the democratised electorate. Historians have disagreed (as outlined above) on the degree to which the programme's proposals became prominent election issues, and how far they achieved their author's personal and political objectives. To begin our analysis of the impact of Chamberlain, we should first start by answering the basic question of how and how far the election of 1885 was really a contest dominated by radicalism as has been widely suggested. Using a five-word taxonomy of radicalism, Figure 2.4 below affirms this strongly:

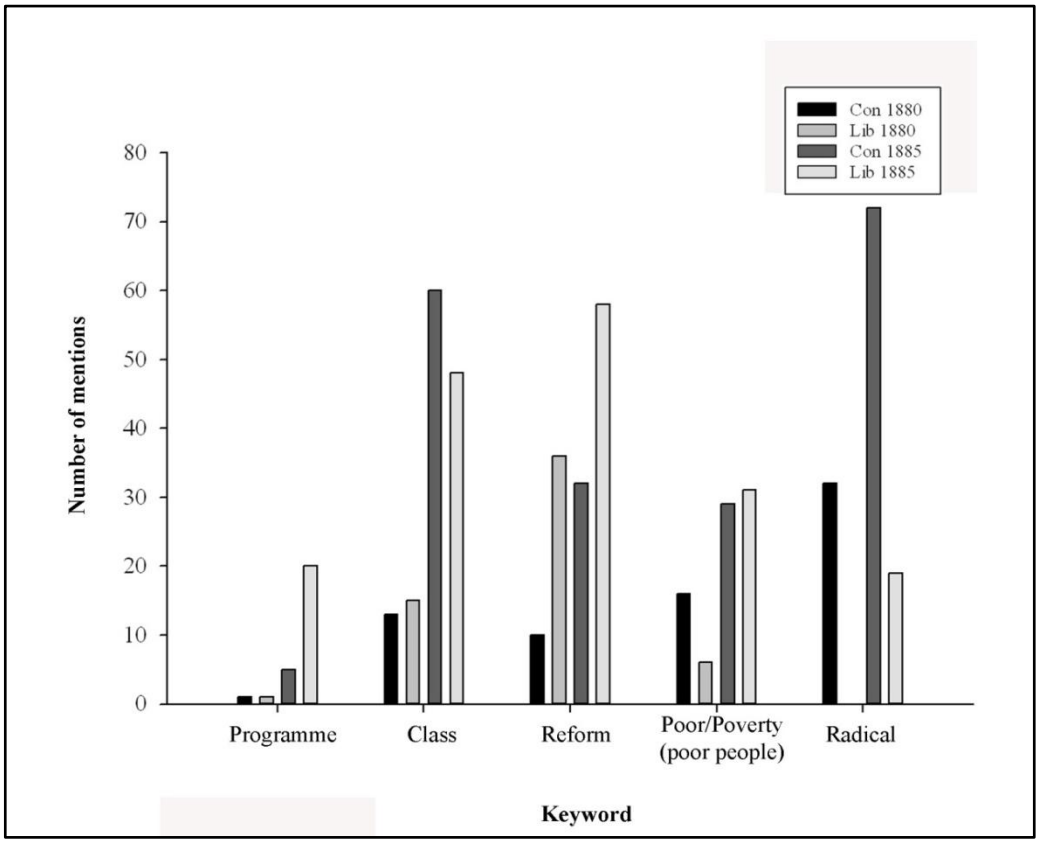

Figure 2.4: Radicalism in East Anglia, 1880-1885.

See Appendix 2.6.

As the graph shows, the first keyword ('programme') increases from two mentions in 1880 to 25 in 1885 amongst both parties, with a particularly large increase on the Liberal side. As Appendix 2.6 shows, this trend was sustained in subsequent elections in the period (with a combined average score of 26) and was also mirrored on the national stage in 1885. Indeed, if we investigate the East Anglian hits more closely using Keyword in Context (KWIC) analysis, we can see that the vast majority of hits refer to Chamberlain's Programme. Overall, the word 'programme' appears to have entered political

vocabulary in 1885 and maintained a similar level of visibility thereafter. It would seem difficult not to at least partially credit the establishment of this new trend to Chamberlain.

The second keyword is 'class'. As the graph shows, this scores 13 mentions amongst Conservatives and 16 amongst Liberals in East Anglia in 1880, and roughly quadruples in 1885 with scores of 60 and 48 respectively. On the national stage, Appendix 2.6 shows the cross-party combined score of 46 for 1880 increases to 83: less dramatic, but still almost a doubling. Interestingly, the use of the term 'class' reaches its height in the period in 1885 both in East Anglia and on the national stage, as discussed in a later analysis in Chapter Five.[93] Indeed, it is also worth mentioning (See Appendix 5.6) that when 'working man' is also analysed (alongside variants such as 'worker' and 'workmen') that the 1880 score of 26 for East Anglia increases to 98 in 1885, and stabilises at around 100 for the rest of the period.

This trend also seems to hold true for our three other radical keywords. The third one is 'poor' (in terms of money) and this registers a combined 1880 score of 22 in East Anglia, which more than doubles to 60 for 1885. The fourth keyword 'reform' also roughly doubles from 46 in 1880 to 90 in 1885, and similarly increases on the national stage from 24 to 59 mentions. Finally, and perhaps most interestingly, the keyword 'radical' – mentioned 32 times by East Anglian Conservatives in 1880 but not at all by Liberals – is referred to 72 times by Conservatives and 19 times by Liberals in 1885. These rises are explained on the one hand by some Liberals beginning to self-identify with radicalism: Cecil Norton in Yarmouth was confident enough to refer to a general party gathering as 'we Radicals', and Collings and Wright scarcely tried to hide their caucusite credentials.[94] On the other, Conservatives were increasingly using 'Radical' as a general pejorative label for their opponents who they argued had metamorphosed under the influence of Birmingham. Ailwyn Fellowes told his Mid-Norfolk audience that 'I think the coming fight will not be between the Tory and the Whig parties, but between the Tory party and rampant raging Radicalism.'[95] Indeed after 1885, the Conservatives' use of the more respectable term 'Liberal' (297 uses in 1885) declined rapidly, and after 1892, they were content to describe their opponents as 'Radical' by a margin of almost two to one.[96]

Overall, then, these five radical keywords increased dramatically in 1885 relative to 1880 in East Anglia, with each score at least doubling, and this trend being mirrored (albeit to a lesser degree) on the national stage. This was a permanent change: all the keywords (with the exception of 'reform') stabilised at a much higher level after 1885. However, while the finding that 1885 marked the advent of a new language of radicalism is interesting, it is not especially surprising and generally corroborates what historians have already argued. The deeper question is to ask why things changed in 1885, and how and how far Chamberlain's Programme was responsible. To do this, we can use the corpus to drill

[93] See Chapter Five below, pp.178-85 and Appendix 5.6.

[94] *Yarmouth Independent*, 24 Oct 1885.

[95] *Eastern Daily Press*, 31 Oct 1885.

[96] See Appendices 3.4 and 3.5.

down deeper into specific issues, and investigate what were perhaps Chamberlain's three most famous proposals: Land Reform, Church Disestablishment, and Free Education.

Land reform was by no means a new debate in 1885. Discussions centring on the land, who owned it, and how to best use it were ubiquitous staples of rural political discourse in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.[97] However, from 1870, these discussions were energised first by the agricultural depression, and second by the agitation surrounding ground game and agricultural holdings in the early 1880s.[98] After 1885, however, the enfranchisement of the agricultural labourer encouraged radicals to adopt the ideas of the American land-taxer Henry George, and Professor J.E. Thorold Rogers, and call for the compulsory acquisition and division of private lands to give labourers a stake in the soil.[99] Thus in 1885 Chamberlain, Collings, and Arch advanced the idea that local authorities should acquire the power to compulsorily purchase land so it could be sold at a fixed price to labourers. One might therefore expect mentions of Land Reform to increase in East Anglia in 1885, and Appendix 2.1 confirms this: it rises from 118 aggregate mentions in 1880 to 288, with a relatively even split between the parties. References also double on the national stage, from 82 in 1880 to 173 in 1885. Appendix 2.1 also shows large increases from 1880 for other lemmas such as 'acre' (from 3 to 51 mentions), 'allotments/smallholdings' (5 to 54), 'transfer' (1 to 23), and 'cow' (0 to 19). Unsurprisingly, the vast majority (more than 95%) of the mentions of these words in 1885 amongst both parties were in the context of Land Reform, and of those, around two-thirds clearly related to Chamberlain's proposals.

These figures are enlightening, but we need greater analysis of context before we can form any firm conclusions. Using KWICs, I have classified each instance when Land Reform was cited in East Anglia in 1885, so we can better understand why it was mentioned when it was. Figure 2.5 below shows this for the Liberals:[100]

[97] M. Cragoe and P. Readman, 'Introduction' in M. Cragoe and P. Readman (eds.), *The Land Question in Britain 1750-1950*, (Basingstoke, 2010), p.1.

[98] Cragoe and Readman, *Land Question*, pp.9-10.

[99] Cragoe and Readman, *Land Question*, pp.10-11.

[100] Note that this (and future) tables for aggregate KWIC analyses do not classify each and every instance, because naturally a minority of mentions were miscellaneous, and did not fit into any common categories.

Figure 2.5: Liberals and Land Reform in East Anglia in 1885: Common Contexts

Context of Liberal Mentions of Land (130 total)	Score	Percentage of total mentions
Benefits of owning land	30	23%
Land ownership monopoly	20	15%
Attacks on landowners	24	18%
Transfer of land simplification/ facilitation	16	12%
Evocations of the past	8	6%
Compulsory purchase	8	6%

Figure 2.5 shows that 44 (33%) of Liberal mentions were *either* complaints on the monopolisation of land by elites or attacks on landowners. These remarks were often forthright: Falk in East-Norfolk argued that 'a man who had more landed property than he knew what to do with should be compelled to sell part of it…to be given out to the agricultural labourer' while Tillett in Norwich contended that 'the soil in England should no longer remain the monopoly of a few thousand…[it] should to a much greater extent come within the reach of every honest man in England'.[101] Finally, a North Norfolk speaker accused Tory landlords of wanting to ensure that 'the industrious, thrifty labourer should be landless, moneyless, and hopeless, and have nothing but the poor-house before him at the end of his career.'[102]

The next largest portion shown on Figure 2.5 is the 30 (23%) instances where Liberals extolled the benefits of owning land. Wright at Norwich claimed that 'the love of all that was beautiful in the world, industry, thrift and sobriety had been associated with the ownership of land…why should it be the privilege of one class?'[103], while a speaker at Mid-Norfolk declared his belief in 'men having…half an acre to an acre of land to cultivate, which would… occupy their leisure hours…[and] add to the chances of a man's sobriety and steadiness.'[104] The undercurrents of sentimentality which ran through many of these appeals should not be underplayed. Perhaps the most striking came from Collings, who told his audience a tale of 'a time when the rural population of this country had interests of various kinds in the lands on which they dwelt...rights of common, of cutting turf, of feeding cattle and poultry...a time which has been described by one of our chief historians as a time of "rude abundance"'.[105] Overall, eight of the 130 instances featured evocations of the past, and 'enclosure' was also mentioned 15 times by Liberals in 1885 when it was entirely absent in the 1880, 1874, or 1835

[101] *Eastern Daily Press*, 9 and 10 Nov 1885.

[102] *Dereham and Fakenham Times*, 17 Oct 1885.

[103] *Eastern Daily Press*, 10 0ct 1885.

[104] *Eastern Daily Press*, 10 0ct, 1 Dec, 1885.

[105] *East Anglian Daily Times*, 18 Nov 1885.

corpora. This provides some quantitative reinforcement of Readman's observation that the language of Liberal Land Reformers struck an unusually sentimental chord.[106]

We can now move on to an equivalent analysis of the 158 Conservative mentions of Land Reform in East Anglia. Figure 2.6 below gives us the following results:

Figure 2.6: Conservatives and Land Reform in East Anglia in 1885: Common Contexts

Context of Conservative Mentions of Land (158 total)	Score	Percentage of total mentions
Theft/compulsory purchase of land	36	23%
Transfer of land simplification/ facilitation	27	17%
General mocking of radical Land Reform	14	9%
Good landlords	13	8%
General issues of agriculture and farming	18	11%

Figure 2.6 shows that the most popular context for Conservatives was the proposed compulsory purchase (or theft, as many saw it) of the land. Another 14 (9%) of instances consisted of general mockery of the radical land proposals, which speakers attacked with zeal: Weller-Polley at Sudbury claimed that the Liberals wanted to 'seize the land altogether, an act on a par with highway robbery…. of course the squire and the farmers would have been driven away and they would all be left trying to live upon their acre of land alone.'[107] Amherst at South-West Norfolk claimed that 'Mr Chamberlain…who had gone in for robbery…said in January last that for generations the agricultural labourer had been oppressed, ignored, defrauded; that he had now to be reckoned with and that the rich must pay a ransom for the evil they had done.'.[108] Finally, Bourke at King's Lynn characterised the radical programme as 'revolutionary doctrines…Free Education…land compulsorily taken…compulsion was the Alpha and Omega of the whole of the Radical programme.'[109]

Although most mentions of the land were in the context of attacking their opponents' schemes, Conservatives were by no means relentlessly negative. There were also attempts to defend the much-assailed landlords in 13 instances: Lord Rendlesham of Woodbridge, himself a large landowner, argued that an extension of the allotment system would 'be done spontaneously by most landlords in England without recourse to the law…showing that a good feeling prevails between the landlord and his tenant' and he promised that he personally would make land available at reasonable rents.[110] Bourke at King's Lynn also reassured his audience that 'I am quite sure every large proprietor of land

[106] Readman, *Land and Nation*, pp.143-4.

[107] *Ipswich Journal*, 10 Oct 1885.

[108] *Norfolk Argus*, 10 Nov 1885.

[109] *Lynn News*, 14 Nov 1885.

[110] *Ipswich Journal*, 29 Sept 1885.

would be only too happy to see the transfer of land made more easy'.[111] Indeed, many Conservatives (in 27 instances) similarly endorsed the cheapening and simplification of land transfer, and this allowed some to claim they were actually closer to Gladstone's manifesto than were the radicals.[112]

Overall, this section has confirmed that Chamberlain's proposals on Land Reform were highly influential in East Anglia amongst both parties, and to a lesser but still notable degree on the national stage. The Chamberlainite view of the land was by no means universal amongst Liberals, with some candidates (perhaps especially Everett in Woodbridge) professing themselves decidedly opposed to 'arbitrary interference with the ownership of the land'.[113] Others, such as the more moderate Colman at Norwich, West at Ipswich, and Crossley at Lowestoft, indicated that they would support the simplification and cheapening of land transfer as proposed by Gladstone, but this only accounted for 16 of the 130 mentions shown on Figure 2.5. For the most part, moderate Liberals were as quiet on the subject as their radical counterparts were noisy. A lot can perhaps be read into the fact that Collings travelled around East Anglia so much, and was invited to visit each rural division in Suffolk to speak at least once during the election campaign, and also that his speeches consumed considerably more column inches in *The East Anglian Daily Times* than those of his colleagues.[114] It may have been partly on account of Collings' regional prominence, but there seems little doubt that Chamberlainite Land Reform proposals strongly influenced the platform of many – if not most – East Anglian Liberals, and this in turn inspired a concerted Conservative counter-attack. Whether Liberal candidates genuinely agreed with Chamberlain and Collings, or were simply floating the Birmingham proposals to entice the agricultural labourers is harder to assess, but references to the land did seem to inspire unusually passionate, bombastic, and often sentimental appeals. For the Conservatives, the Chamberlainite threat was real, and his proposals were far more objectionable than Gladstone's, whose moderate manifesto was almost entirely ignored.

A second plank in the Chamberlainite platform was the Disestablishment and Disendowment of the Church of England. The privileges of the established Church, not to mention its perceived sympathy with the Conservative Party, were long running grievances for a Liberal Party increasingly influenced by Nonconformity. Although both Chamberlain and Gladstone had suggested that the question would not be considered by the coming Parliament (the latter famously described it as a matter 'for the dim and distant future') the ball had unquestionably been set in motion. Indeed, a much-publicised survey by the Liberationist Society of the views of the 1885 cohort of Liberal candidates suggested that over 500 were in favour, with only 43 against.[115] Simon has argued that 'agitation over

[111] *Lynn News*, 14 Nov 1885.

[112] See for example *Lynn News*, 14 Nov 1885 (meeting at King's Lynn) and *Ipswich Journal*, 26 Sept 1885 (meeting at Stowmarket).

[113] *East Anglian Daily Times*, 11 Nov 1885.

[114] L. Blaxill, 'The Idea of Nationalisation in Suffolk electoral politics 1885-1910, with special reference to Ipswich' (MPhil, Cambridge, 2001), pp.25-6.

[115] *Norwich Argus*, 14 Oct 1885.

the question was both fierce and ferocious; and was closely bound up with the name of Joseph Chamberlain', and Appendix 2.8 does indeed suggest that use of religious vocabulary exploded in this contest.[116] 'Church' was mentioned 35 times in East Anglia in 1880 but 216 in 1885, 'religion' increased from 20 to 48 mentions, and 'Disestablishment' itself surged from 2 to 77. Taken together, all the religious words in Appendix 2.8 totalled 463 mentions in 1885, roughly a tripling of 1880's net score of 126 and more than double the 1886-1910 average of 196. On the national stage, the net score for religious words also almost doubled from 114 in 1880 to 244 in 1885. These figures suggest that Simon's argument that 1885 represented the apex of electoral agitation over Disestablishment could perhaps be broadened to apply to religion *in general*. As Appendix 4.3 shows, no other single general election in the period – be it 1892 influenced by Welsh Church Disestablishment, or 1900 by Ritualism – came close to matching the volume of religious language deployed in 1885 in East Anglia.[117]

What, then, were the main characteristics of the religious language in 1885, and how can we account for the steep increase? Using the keyword 'Church' (which is by far the most prominent individual religious lemma in the period) we can once again perform an aggregate KWIC analysis. Figure 2.7 shows the results for the Liberals in East Anglia in 1885:

Figure 2.7: Liberals and the Church in East Anglia in 1885: Common Contexts

Context of Liberal Mentions of Church (105 total)	Score	Percentage of total mentions
Proclamations in favour of Disestablishment	37	35%
Disestablishment as a route to religious equality	17	16%
Candidate distancing himself from Disestablishment	10	10%
Attacks on Conservatives for Politicising the Church	9	9%

Figure 2.7 suggests that the most common context (35% of mentions) were proclamations in favour of Disestablishment. This seems surprisingly high, especially as both Gladstone and Chamberlain had tried to diffuse the issue in the proceeding weeks. These varied in tone: Collings was explosive, boasting that 'we will dispense with that great burden on the land – the Church of England', while George Rix at East Norfolk was more measured, asking 'why should the Nonconformist classes…which the majority of the inhabitants of the towns and villages are….be compelled against

[116] Simon, 'Church Disestablishment', p.791.

[117] See Chapter Four, Appendix 4.3.

their will to support a body from which they conscientiously dissented?'.[118] Indeed, this support did not just come from candidates who were themselves dissenters: William Gurdon (South Norfolk) declared himself 'a staunch Churchman' but reassured fellow Anglicans that 'Disestablishment and Disendowment will not hurt the present race of clergymen'.[119] The most popular argument in favour of Disestablishment was (perhaps unsurprisingly) that of religious equality, which was deployed on 17 occasions where 'church' was mentioned, and seemed to arouse high passion: Everett pronounced that 'the spirit of the age has…softened the yoke of State Churches, but the cruel memories of the past make me rejoice to see that yoke about to be completely broken to pieces and destroyed.'[120] The argument for religious equality also extended (in nine instances) to attacks on the Church's supposed affiliation with the Conservatives, which for Stevenson at Eye represented 'the Tories… trying to identify the fortunes of the party with the fortunes of the Church...[which] raise[d] in the hearts of all those who were not a member of the Church of England the most rancorous hatred'.[121]

The Conservatives in East Anglia were perhaps more animated in their opposition to Church Disestablishment than they were to Land Reform. Speakers mentioned 'church' 111 times, and Figure 2.8 below shows the most common contexts:

Figure 2.8: Conservatives and the Church in East Anglia in 1885: Common Contexts

Context of Conservative mentions of Church (111 total)	Score	Percentage of total mentions
Attacks on Liberals for tying to weaken/ abolish Church	36	32%
General vows to protect Church	31	28%
Benefits of Church (education)	8	8%
Benefits of Church (Church sponsored charities)	11	10%
Benefits of Church (classless, available for all classes)	10	9%
Benefits of Church (improvement of character)	3	3%

[118] *East Anglian Daily Times*, 6 Nov 1885; *Eastern Daily Press*, 12 Nov 1885. For more on Collings' attacks, see Blaxill, 'The Idea of Nationalisation', p.45.

[119] *Lynn News*, 5 Dec 1885.

[120] *East Anglian Daily Times*, 25 Nov 1885.

[121] *Stowmarket Courier*, 28 Nov 1885.

Figure 2.8 shows that 32% of mentions were criticisms of the Liberals for attacking the Church, and these were particularly passionate and energetic. Amherst argued that 'they would lose a great deal and gain nothing except destroy[ing] one of the greatest bulwarks of Christianity in the world…one of the greatest influences against the spread of Atheism and vice.'[122] Bentinck meanwhile lamented that 'it is rather hard to realise what the effects of Disestablishment would be— no religious service for the Coronation, our Throne open to any religion, and our fine old churches and cathedrals turned into music-halls one day and Mr. Bradlaugh preaching in the pulpits the next'.[123] The 31 pledges to defend the Church were also trenchant and resolute: Bentinck declared that 'the very existence of the Conservative Party is bound up with the existence of the Church' and Hoare swore that the Conservatives were 'a party whose tenets are loyalty to the throne, fidelity to the Church'.[124] For Francis Hervey at Bury, 'the first clause in the Magna Carta was undertaking to defend the Church of England and our Queen had sworn to defend it.'[125] Indeed, many clergymen also issued robust defences of their Church from independent platforms during the campaign. Reverend Constantine Frere, a Finningham clergyman, circulated a pamphlet in Suffolk titled 'The Coming Election and the Coming Danger' which warned Anglican voters of the spiritual penalty that might be meted out on the other side for failing to protect their Church in her hour of need.[126] At Norwich, the Bishop himself made a sweeping intervention, publishing an open letter in the press where he called on 'every Churchman (layman, or clergyman) [and] every loyal citizen… [to] be our defence by word or deed.'[127]

Although the Conservative defence was robust, it was far from the case, as we saw with Land Reform, that it was entirely negative. Many candidates – such as Weller Polley in Sudbury, Fellowes at Mid Norfolk – agreed that the Church needed reform, but that confiscatory legislation was a poor instrument with which to achieve it.[128] These speakers did not simply present the Church as an untouchable and unquestionable edifice as some of their colleagues were apt to do, but made a positive case for its benefits on the community, arguing that it helped promote voluntary education, sponsored charities, fostered improvement in civic character, and was a classless institution available to everyone. These more positive arguments made up, on aggregate, 32 (30%) of the instances where 'church' was mentioned.

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[122] *Eastern Daily Press*, 30 Sept 1885.

[123] *Norwich Argus*, 10 Nov 1885. See also Birkbeck, *Eastern Daily Press*, 11 Nov 1885, who also claimed that 'the Liberal Party of East Norfolk…would be glad to see the churches turned into music halls'

[124] *Norwich Argus*, 10 and 3 Nov 1885.

[125] *Bury and Norwich Post*, 10 Nov 1885.

[126] Constantine Frere, *The Coming Election and the Coming Danger. A letter to the Electors of Finningham, Suffolk* (Norwich, 1885), p.14.

[127] Letter reprinted in full in *Eastern Daily Press*, 12 Nov 1885.

[128] *East Anglian Daily Times*, 23 Nov 1885.

Overall, from the quantity and tone of the rhetoric surrounding the issue of Church Disestablishment, one might be tempted to conclude, as with Land Reform, that Chamberlain had again successfully set the agenda by choosing an issue which really roused both Liberals and Conservatives, and created clear dividing lines. However, as with Land Reform, the proposal also had its public detractors amongst the Liberal Party: ten instances where 'church' was mentioned were occasions when a candidate distanced himself from outright Disestablishment and Disendowment. A good example was the chairman of a meeting at North-West Norfolk who, just before the Liberal candidate Joseph Arch was about to deliver a stinging attack on the Church, proclaimed that 'He was of those who contended that…Disestablishment…would be a national mistake, that… Disendowment…would be more than a mistake…it would be a national sin.'[129] This is not to deny that Chamberlain had once again managed to energise and enthuse a good number of colleagues, but that he also had detractors: even though only a small minority (as with Land Reform) were willing to speak up. He also galvanised Conservative opponents who, unlike the Liberals, were hardly divided on the issue.

The final main plank of the Unauthorized Programme was Free Education. Chamberlain's proposal was to increase the provision of secular board schooling run by local authorities, and to pay the school pence for those who could not afford it. This would in theory give the poorer classes an alternative to Church of England voluntary schooling, which (in rural areas especially) was often the only option available.[130] Unlike Land Reform and Church Disestablishment, this issue has not attracted a great deal of historiographical interest or been widely recognised as a political hot potato in 1885.[131] However, the corpus suggests it made almost as large an impression on party language. As Appendix 2.9 shows, 'school' was mentioned just 17 times by both parties in East Anglia in 1880, but this increased by a factor of six to 102 in 1885. 'Education' also rose by a similar ratio from 23 in 1880 to 145 by 1885, and 'child' nearly quadrupled from 16 to 62 mentions. Increases in all three words were also considerable, if less striking, on the national stage. Taken together, the lemmas 'school', 'education' and 'child' tally 146 mentions for Conservatives and 163 for Liberals. The most popular contexts for all three words in East Anglia are shown in Figure 2.9 below for both parties:

[129] *Lynn News*, 30 Nov 1885.

[130] Lynch, *Liberal Party*, pp.168-71.

[131] The exception to this is A. Simon, 'Joseph Chamberlain and Free Education in the Election of 1885', *History of Education* (1973), pp.56-78.

Figure 2.9: Liberals, Conservatives and Education in East Anglia 1885: Common Contexts

Liberal mentions of School, Child, Education (163 total)	Score	Percentage of total mentions
Poor people priced out of education	34	21%
General expressions of support for Free Education	34	21%
Will give dignity to poor/ will help poor	19	12%
Improve social mobility of poor	14	9%
Reassurance that religious aspect to education will be kept	9	6%

Conservative mentions of School, Child, Education (146 total)	Score	Percentage of total mentions
Weaken voluntary schools	26	18%
Expensive, wasteful	24	16%
Highlighting Liberal attack on religious basis of education	19	13%
Destroys fee-payer's sense of ownership	13	9%
Criticising compulsory and universal education	16	11%
Poor standard of Board Schools	5	3%

As Figure 2.9's first table shows, 21% of Liberal mentions were general expressions in favour of Chamberlain's scheme. Most of the rest were discussions of the policy's impact, and this overwhelmingly focussed on the potential to better the lot of the poor: Stevenson, for example, argued that school fees came at 'the very period of their life when the shoe pinched most'.[132] Speakers seldom shied away from the compulsory aspect of the measure, contending that it would give dignity to the poor and improve their social mobility when, at present, many were unwilling or unable to pay the school pence. Wright asked his audience to imagine 'the saving to the country in the preservation of all those youths from criminal lives…[that] Free Education would remedy' and Arch advocated that all children 'must [be] sent to school…[so]…they could pass...the required standards'.[133] Stevenson also argued that compulsory Free Education was simply 'going one step further' than Gladstone's 1870 Education Act.[134] There were, however, also a number of reassurances from more moderate Liberals that the religious aspect of education would be kept. One Liberal speaker even said that he 'thought it was to the eternal disgrace of Birmingham, that there…the Bible was first shut out of the elementary schools.'[135]

[132] *Stowmarket Courier*, 21 Nov 1885.

[133] *Eastern Evening News*, 6 Nov 1885; *Lynn News*, 30 Nov 1885.

[134] *Stowmarket Courier*, 28 Nov 1885.

[135] *Lynn News*, 30 Nov 1885.

For their part, the Conservatives presented a number of familiar arguments against the measure. One (mentioned 19 times) was that religion would be undermined by the creation of secular board schools. Bourke (King's Lynn) described it as 'destroying religious education…[it] will sap the foundations not only of the Church of England but of all religion', Bullard (Norwich) as a springboard to the 'spreading of Unitarian and atheist views', and Charley (Ipswich) complained that 'intellect without God is the devil'.[136] However, most of their other objections struck a libertarian tone. Berating the expense of the scheme was common (24 instances), as was the idea that voluntary schools reliant on fees would be bankrupted by free competitors (26). For Hervey 'the reason why the Birmingham school of politicians were going about advocating so-called Free Education...[was] simply to undermine the voluntary system...[where] children were the children of the state, and not of their parents, and…would be brought up as citizens, and not as men and women'.[137] The idea that parents would be unable to object to poor standards in free provision because they were not paying for it was also popular (13 mentions), as was a general critique of compulsion (16 mentions). Charley accused the Liberals of proposing 'a legislative straightjacket' composed of 'compulsory, communistic and socialistic ideas' and Amherst declared that 'the Radical, programme was full of measures of compulsion, but the Conservatives did not propose to compel people to do things; they believed in giving them the facilities of doing things and leaving them to execute them of their own free will.'[138]

Overall, this analysis of the three main planks of the Unauthorized Programme resoundingly confirms that the impact of Chamberlain's proposals in East Anglia in 1885 was little short of immense, and his effect on the national speaking campaign still considerable. Land reform, Church Disestablishment, and Free Education formed the principal issues of the contest, far eclipsing Gladstone's modest manifesto, and historians such as Hamer, Marsh, Barker, and Clarke and Langford have surely underestimated the extent to which this radical triumvirate profoundly influenced the speaking campaign. The unauthorized proposals were not just widely-mentioned, but were debated with zeal in an intense and inflammatory war of words from both sides.

The content of Liberal appeals was also striking. Land reform was often articulated as an attack on landowners and their monopoly on the soil, Disestablishment was supported by the vast majority of candidates, and Free Education was justified in terms of its effect on bettering the poor. The notion that many of these appeals had a class basis should also not be discounted. As Appendix 5.6 shows, 'class' was more mentioned in 1885 than in any of the other eight contests in the period, in both East Anglia and the national stage. Indeed, when 'class' is investigated using a KWIC analysis, Appendix 2.7A suggests that it was often used in contexts which implied conflict: 25% of Liberal mentions concerned turbulence in the relationships between classes, and 35% of Conservative references were attacks on the Liberals for promoting class legislation, or creating class division. Appendices 2.7A and 2.7B also suggest that – when parties mentioned poor people, working men, or

[136] *Lynn News*, 14 Nov 1885; *Eastern Daily Press*, 16 Nov 1885; *Ipswich Journal*, 14 Nov 1885.

[137] *Bury and Norwich Post*, 10 Nov 1885.

[138] *East Anglian Daily Times*, 15 Nov 1885; *Norwich Argus*, 3 Nov 1885.

the working classes – that they were referring to material factor such as wages, food, and conditions. And whether Liberals were really speaking the language of class or not, the Conservatives certainly thought that they were. Not for nothing was Lady Henniker's Mid-Suffolk Primrose League habitation set up so that 'the dames of England should come forwards to stem the torrent of Socialism flooding the country'.[139] Also not for nothing was the popular brewer Harry Bullard beseeched to stand for Norwich by an open letter sporting 5,000 signatures, which sought a champion to 'stem the tide of Socialist and falsely-called Liberal measures'.[140] Overall, the backdrop to the general election of 1885 was a volatile one: the democratic recasting of the system which caused farmer to be eclipsed by labourer, the influx of unknown carpet bagger candidates, and perhaps especially the sudden eruption of a radical volcano in Birmingham arguably contributed to make the speaking campaign of 1885 remarkably class-centric, and created a sharp polarity between left and right which was perhaps not equalled until 1910.

V

Conclusion

The language of East Anglian electoral politics had been transformed in the space of one general election. The 1880 contest was fought on traditional issues of government expenditure, foreign policy, and agriculture, and candidates in the county divisions addressed their appeals to the dominant voting class of farmers. In this respect it was not dissimilar in tone or content from 1874, and even bore similarities to 1835. This represented an electoral environment where the language of radicalism, and ideas such as Disestablishment, Free Education, or radical Land Reform (even though none of them were new) would inevitably struggle to make an impact outside the boroughs. The enfranchisement of the labourer changed this dramatically, and immediately posed a new challenge to the parties. On the one hand, this was a matter of logistics: of broadcasting party message more loudly to more sets of ears. On the other, it was a question of reformatting it: so that its contents would appeal to a new class of voters whose politics were unknown, but probably radical. Historians have acknowledged the former, but surely underestimated the latter, and this chapter has shown the extent to which agricultural labourers' concerns eclipsed the staple language of farming in the space of one election in East Anglia.

But this change in message was not just one of tone and presentation, but also content. The proposals of Chamberlain's Unauthorized Programme – which would have been unlikely to have found national favour in 1880 while half the country still lived under the 1832 county franchise – were speedily installed at the centre of the contest, and inspired inflammatory and impassioned appeals from both sides. Chamberlain may have aimed his programme at the boroughs, but it bit deeper in the counties. In East Anglia, even with caucusite radical tribunes fighting Ipswich and Norwich, an

[139] *Diss Express*, 13 Nov 1885.

[140] *Norfolk Mail*, 22 Sept 1885.

aggregate analysis of radical language (see Figure 2.10 below) still finds counties ahead of boroughs by a rough ratio of 55 to 45.[141]

Figure 2.10: Radicalism in Boroughs and Counties in East Anglia in 1885

Lemma	Borough	County
Radical	48	43
Class	32	66
Programme	25	8
Chamberlain	35	44
Land Reform	138	187
Church	110	93
Education/School/Child	127	124
Working Man/Class	21	52
Reform	28	58
Total	**564**	**675**

This analysis is particularly interesting because it suggests that the counties were the constituencies where Chamberlain's ideas were most debated, and these delivered the best results for the Liberal Party. Figure 2.10, and the general findings of this chapter, cast the 1885 election in a different light: rather than presenting a contest where the unauthorized proposals dominated in boroughs (where the Liberals did badly) they instead show them featuring more heavily in counties where the Liberals did well.

Chamberlain's programme, and the new dominance of labourers, also arguably went some way to creating new dividing lines in politics. Moderate Liberals were caught in a difficult position. With radicals like Collings introducing Chamberlain as the working classes' 'greatest and most powerful friend, the man of the future…where the hopes of democracy lie' and Wright complaining that 'Mr. Gladstone's manifesto has fallen a little short of that of Mr. Chamberlain' old Liberals like West and Colman in East Anglia faced the same dilemma as Hartington, Forster, and Goschen.[142] This was what *The Eastern Daily Press* called 'the choice of moderate Liberals': namely whether to keep the company of the radicals or the Conservatives.[143] As it transpired, they broadly chose to remain with the former, but it was more or less impossible to maintain anything approaching a consistent party platform in 1885. West's boast that 'he did not believe at any time in history that the Liberal Party…[was] more united than it was at the present time' rang hollow, and he and other moderates like Colman at

[141] These figures are generated from the special borough and county corpora for 1885. See n.58 above.

[142] *East Anglian Daily Time*s, 25 Nov 1885; *Eastern Daily Press*, 17 Oct 1885.

[143] *Eastern Daily Press*, 2 Sept 1885.

Norwich, Crossley at Lowestoft, and Hardcastle at Bury chose to remain quiet on Chamberlainite issues, and often spoke in bland and anodyne terms.[144]

Conservatives ridiculed them without mercy: Wright's promises were described as going 'somewhat further than the mealy-mouthed words of Mr. Colman'.[145] Charley, meanwhile, declared that 'the views of Mr. West are diametrically opposed to those of Mr. Collings' and mocked 'the blue blooded aristocrat sitting at the feet of a …republican... [which] could not be a very edifying spectacle for the whigs of Ipswich'.[146] Indeed, it certainly seemed likely that Chamberlain had weakened the ties many moderates felt with their party, and although the number of defections in 1885 has probably been exaggerated by Lynch, they were still significant.[147] In this respect, historians who see Chamberlain's 1885 pyrotechnics as a tactical failure are perhaps forgetting that smashing the whigs was – as is clear from his correspondence to other radicals like Dilke and Labouchere – as important to him as seizing the national election agenda, and if he even if he wasn't entirely successful in the latter, he achieved notable success in the former.[148]

The enfranchisement of the agricultural labourer, and the prominence of Chamberlain's programme, also presented new challenges for the Conservatives. While they trenchantly opposed the Birmingham radicalism, their answer was by no means wholly, or even largely, negative. They tried to present a modernised party image, and made a bid for the libertarian ground they felt had been vacated by their opponents. The 1885 election is littered with Conservative self-assessments stressing their progressive credentials: Bullard professed himself 'not one of the last century Tories…[he]…wanted to move with the times' while Birkbeck claimed that he was 'not an old-school Tory... he was almost a liberal-conservative, or what twenty years ago would have been considered a Liberal.'[149] They also tried as hard as Liberals to claim that they were the better friends of the working classes, as Appendix 2.7C shows. Disraeli's social reforms – remarkably absent from language in 1880 – were sometimes used to evidence this, as was the occasional reference to Peel or Shaftesbury. Finally, they attacked the perceived 'legislative straitjacket' prescribed by their opponents, and were thus more likely to preach non-intervention, a good example being their opposition to Local Option to defend the working man's Sunday pint. For Charley, the whole election came down to 'the controversy which is agitating England from one end to another...whether we are to depend upon ourselves or upon the State'[150] Indeed, it was perhaps symbolic that it was J.P.D. Cobbold – a member of the old brewing family that had dominated Ipswich Conservatism for four decades between the 1840s and 1880s – who opened a meeting by promising to reclaim 'the old banner of Liberalism inscribed with the word 'Freedom'

[144] *Bury and Norwich Post,* 10 Nov 1885.

[145] *Norwich Argus*, 27 Oct 1885.

[146] *East Anglian Daily Time*s, 14 Nov 1885.

[147] Lynch, *Liberal Party*, pp.46-50.

[148] Barker, *Gladstone and Radicalism*, pp.18-19.

[149] *Eastern Daily Press*, 14 and 11 Nov 1885.

[150] *Ipswich Journal*, 14 Nov 1885.

which at the present time [was] Caucus'.[151] This realignment in Conservatism in the face of the radical menace was again clearly a product of Chamberlain's intervention but, as Parry and Self argue, it was, again, what he wanted.[152] To be seen as the primary enemy of the Conservatives was arguably half the battle in establishing himself as leader of the radical Liberal Party of tomorrow.

Overall, this chapter has argued that that historians should recognise the transformative impact of the 1883-85 reforms on party language. The new system represented a break from the past not just in the ways elections were fought, but also in the way they were articulated, and even conceived of, by contemporaries. The enfranchisement of the rural working class was as important as the enfranchisement of the urban working class twenty years previously, and it was the ironically the agricultural labourer who did most to help Chamberlain into a far stronger position in 1885 than historians – who have perhaps taken the Birmingham radical too much at his word – have generally recognised. It was not for nothing that William Tuckwell, a Warwickshire clergyman and Christian Socialist, recalled that in 1885 'his [Chamberlain's] influence with the democracy had for some time past excelled Gladstone's; I found of late that if audiences cheered Gladstone's name for two minutes, they cheered Chamberlain's for five'.[153] It was also telling that – despite his private dissatisfaction with the election result – Chamberlain gave a speech to a Liberal banquet in Birmingham after the final returns in 1885 where (as he recalled in 1891): 'I claimed that the battle had been fought and won on the Unauthorized Programme, which had saved the Liberal Party from disaster'.[154] These immodest words might well have been bluster, but they were scarcely those of a man whose position had been weakened. His Unauthorized Programme was more than a paper tiger: it may have fallen short of what he intended, but it succeeded in placing him at the heart of a new and emerging political divide with an increasingly radical Liberal Party on one side, and a more progressive and moderate Conservative Party on the other. Had Gladstone not surprised the country in 1886 with Home Rule, uprooting the 1885 Parliament, and detonating a party realignment of a still larger scale, the impact of reform might have been an almost immediate shift towards radical government rather than, as it turned out, two decades of radical opposition.

[151] *Ipswich Journal*, 17 Nov 1885.

[152] Parry, *Rise and Fall*, p.289; Self, *The Evolution of the British Party System*, p.56.

[153] W. Tuckwell, *Reminiscences of a Radical Parson* (London, 1905), p.59.

[154] Chamberlain, *A Political Memoir*, p.135.

CHAPTER 3

The Impact of Home Rule

The General Elections of 1886 and 1892

I

Electoral Politics 1886-1892- An Overview

On the 8th June 1886, Gladstone's Irish Home Rule Bill was defeated in the House of Commons with 93 Liberals – almost a third of the party – voting against it. Parliament was dissolved two weeks later and the country found itself in the throes of another general election. A substantial group of Liberals – including Hartington, Goschen, Henry James, Lansdowne, Chamberlain, and Bright – left the party in opposition to the bill, and fought the election as Liberal Unionists. The speaking campaign was dominated by one issue: Irish Home Rule. The corpus suggests that 'Ireland' and 'Irish' alone comprised over one percent *of all words uttered* on both the national stage and in East Anglia, on a par with basic words in the English language such as 'they', 'want', and 'must'. As an Ipswich Liberal remarked 'this election will be fought on the question of Ireland and nothing else'.[1]

When the votes were counted, it was clear that the Liberal Party had suffered a huge defeat: their vote had declined by 2.4 percentage points, and they were reduced to just 192 seats, a decline of 127 from 1885. On the other side of the House, 316 Conservatives and 77 Liberal Unionists were returned to form the new Government. The result signalled the end of the Liberal Party's domination of politics, and they were confined to opposition for seventeen of the next twenty years. This, and the fact that the vast majority of Liberal Unionists never returned to the fold, has led some historians – most notably Jonathan Parry – to contend that the great Home Rule schism of 1886 was chiefly responsible for the long-term decline of British Liberalism.[2]

The East Anglian picture was equally grim for the Liberals, and their great success of 1885 was decisively reversed, seemingly due to the abstention or defection of the agricultural labourers.[3] Nine of their twelve seats were lost: five to the Conservatives, and four to Liberal Unionists. In the boroughs, the swing to the Unionists was 2.2%, and this left J.J. Colman as the only remaining Liberal member. In Ipswich the Conservatives Charles Dalrymple and Lord Elcho (who had won the by-

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[1] *East Anglian Daily Times*, 22 Jun 1886.

[2] See J. Parry, *The Rise and Fall of Liberal Government in Victorian Britain* (New Haven, 1993), pp. 296-303, 306-9; N. Blewett, *The Peers, the Parties and the People: the General Elections of 1910* (Bristol, 1972), pp.10-15; D Savage, 'The General Election of 1886 in Great Britain and Ireland' (PhD, London, 1958), pp. 557-60; I. Cawood, 'The Lost Party: Liberal Unionism, 1886-1895' (PhD, University of Leicester, 2009), pp.284-6.

[3] See P. Clarke and K. Langford, 'Hodge's politics: the agricultural labourers and the Third Reform Act in Suffolk' in N. Harte and R. Quinault (eds.), *Land and Society in Britain 1700-1914* (Manchester, 1996), pp.131-2, Cawood; 'The Lost Party', p.206, 208.

election resulting from the dismissal of Jesse Collings and Henry Wyndham West on the grounds of corrupt practice in April)[4] held their seats, as did Samuel Hoare (Norwich), Francis Hervey (Bury St. Edmunds), Harry Tyler (Yarmouth), and Henry Bourke (King's Lynn). In the counties, the results were far more dramatic, with a 6.2% swing to Unionism. The Liberals had won all five Suffolk divisions in 1885, but this time they lost all bar their stronghold at Eye. Two sitting members (Cuthbert Quilter at Sudbury and Saville Crossley at Lowestoft) were returned unopposed as Liberal Unionists, and for the Conservatives, Edward Greene gained Stowmarket with a swing of more than 10%, and Colonel Lloyd-Anstruther defeated Robert Lacey Everett at Woodbridge. In Norfolk, the Liberals were once again confined to just a solitary success in the Northern division. Like in Suffolk, they lost two sitting MPs – Francis Taylor and Robert Gurdon – to Liberal Unionism, with the latter being deselected by the local party caucus before emerging victorious in a heated campaign against James Toller, a 'carpet-bagged' Gladstonian. The Conservatives easily held both the Eastern and South-Western constituencies, and Henry Cavendish-Bentinck even managed to narrowly defeat Joseph Arch in the safest Liberal seat in the region, Norfolk North-West. The East Anglian result was comprehensive enough for *The Ipswich Journal* to declare that 'Boroughs and counties, large constituencies and small, have alike returned an emphatic "No!" to the separatist policies of the moribund government'.[5]

After six years of Conservative rule the general election of 1892 took place. The outgoing ministry, in addition to enjoying favourable economic conditions at home and relative peace abroad, had also passed some notable social reforms including Free Education, an allotments act, and a housing act.[6] Salisbury had taken substantial steps towards assimilating the Liberal Unionists, and the Commons voting records of the two allied parties had already become strikingly similar.[7] The Liberal Party, with Gladstone still at the helm at the age of 82, continued to be committed, at least on paper, to fighting the election on Home Rule, even though the Grand Old Man had privately acknowledged that he was prepared to include it as part of a broader manifesto.[8] This manifesto was supplied in 1891 through the adoption of the National Liberal Federation's (NLF) radical 'Newcastle Programme', which included an eight-hour bill, one-man-one-vote, the Disestablishment of the Welsh Church, and payment of MPs. However, the extent to which Liberals – especially Gladstone himself – really viewed the Newcastle proposals as a positive national programme has been the subject of some debate. Despite these difficulties, the Liberals nevertheless recovered to gain 80 seats and, with support from

[4] For more on the Ipswich election petition and the subsequent ejection of the Liberal members, see L.. Blaxill 'Corrupt Practice and the General Election of 1885 in Ipswich', *Suffolk Review* (2006), pp.35-42.

[5] *Ipswich Journal*, 19 Jul 1886.

[6] See R. Shannon, *The Age of Salisbury, 1881-1902: Unionism and Empire* (Michigan, 1996), pp. 344-69.

[7] J. Fair, 'From Liberal to Conservative: the flight of the Liberal Unionists after 1886', *Victorian Studies* (1986), pp.299-300; J. France, 'Salisbury and the Unionist Alliance', in Lord Blake and H. Cecil (eds.) *Salisbury: the Man and his Policies* (Basingstoke, 1987), pp.231-2, 240; P. Fraser, 'The Liberal Unionist Alliance: Chamberlain, Hartington, and the Conservatives, 1886-1904', *English Historical Review* (1962), pp.53-78.

[8] D. Hamer, 'The Irish Question and Liberal Politics, 1886-1894', in A. O'Day, (ed.), *Reactions to Irish Nationalism* (Dublin, 1987), p.255.

the Irish Nationalists, achieved a Commons majority of 36. In the campaign itself, Home Rule once again easily eclipsed any other issue, with the corpus showing a similar level of visibility to 1886, especially amongst Unionist speakers.

In East Anglia, the Liberals made some impressive gains. Their borough returns were disappointing: they achieved just a 2% swing and failed to unseat either of the Ipswich members, or take King's Lynn, where the colourful Thomas Gibson-Bowles was returned, albeit by just eleven votes. Their one success came in Great Yarmouth, where Harry Tyler was defeated by J.M. Moorsom. In the counties however, they achieved a 4.2% swing and took five seats from their opponents. In Suffolk, Everett managed to regain Woodbridge, and Sydney Stern held Stowmarket which he had gained at a by-election in 1891. In Norfolk, R.J. Price was victorious in the eastern division – a seat the Liberals had not managed to win even in 1885 – and Arch easily regained Norfolk North-West. Perhaps most significantly, Clement Higgins managed to unseat the Liberal Unionist Gurdon at Mid-Norfolk. This meant – owing to the replacement of Crossley in Lowestoft by the Conservative H.S. Foster – that the Liberal Unionists were reduced to two seats in the region: Quilter in Sudbury and Taylor in the South-Norfolk. Overall, East Anglia's representation was now evenly split at nine seats each. Although recent by-election results had augured well for the Liberals, the East Anglian Conservative press were somewhat incredulous that the rural electors in particular had delivered such a harsh verdict on Salisbury's ministry. The *Bury and Norwich Post* wrote that 'even after ten days fighting the issue was by no means certain, and it was not until the least educated of the electorate showed themselves willing to give Mr. Gladstone another chance to rehabilitate himself as a Statesman that the Liberal success...was assured.'[9] Whether this success was delivered by the continued emphasis on Home Rule, the Newcastle Programme, or simply on account of the natural 'swing of the pendulum' is a question which has baffled historians as much as it did contemporaries, and the 1892 contest remains perhaps the most confusing – and certainly the most neglected – election in the period.[10]

II

Introduction

The historiography of these two elections is unbalanced. The campaign of 1886 has attracted a great deal of interest, probably because it brought into the spotlight two of historians' favourite themes of the Victorian period: Gladstone's leadership and Ireland. In addition, it marked a major party realignment and a significant turning of the political tables. Both have made it a ubiquitous highlight in general textbooks. In sharp contrast, the election of 1892 has not been the subject of any major study, even though it is often referred to in passing. This is surprising, because in many ways – as this chapter will go on to demonstrate – 1892 might reasonably be described as the sequel to 1886, once again featuring the triumvirate of Ireland, Gladstone, and Liberal Unionism.

[9] *Bury and Norwich Post*, 26 Jul 1892.

[10] Shannon, *Age of Salisbury*, pp.376-9.

Most of the older works which address these three popular themes are largely high political, stemming from what Joseph Lee has called the 'Cowlingite Clerisy' of the Peterhouse school, and generally contain little direct engagement with electoral language.[11] For the Home Rule crisis, the four staple monographs – Hammond's *Gladstone and the Irish Nation*, O'Farrell's *England and Ireland since 1800*, O'Day's *Irish Home Rule 1867-1921*, and Cooke and Vincent's *The Governing Passion* – rarely venture outside the corridors of Westminster, and the works of Savage, Barker, and Hamer, while shifting the focus slightly towards popular Liberalism, deal largely with party organisation and electioneering.[12] More recently, a number of books – such as the collection *Reactions of Irish Nationalism*, and the works of Loughlin, and Parry – have examined Home Rule in terms of ideas and ideology.[13] Unfortunately, these examinations seldom extend to electoral politics, and when they do, it is rarely in the context of platform speeches. Gladstone's impact on these elections is covered largely through biographies which, by their nature, tend to focus on the Grand Old Man himself and his immediate personal and political peers, rather than on the broader effect of his leadership on constituency campaigns.[14] The majority of the historiography of Liberal Unionism – particularly the studies of Davis, Phillips, Searle, France, Fair, Cornford, Fraser, Goodman, and Lubenow – are also high political, and seldom engage with the language of popular politics.[15]

In recent years, this picture has changed, chiefly due to the influence of the 'linguistic turn'. On the Home Rule crisis, Windscheffel and Lynch both pay close attention to representations of the Irish issue.[16] Perhaps surprisingly given its age, so does Howarth's study of Northamptonshire.[17] We also now have Biagini's new monograph *British Democracy and Irish Nationalism 1876–1906* which

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[11] Cited in Fair, 'From Liberal to Conservative', p.292.

[12] J. Hammond, *Gladstone and the Irish nation* (1964); A. O'Day, *Irish Home Rule 1867-1921* (Manchester, 1998); A. Cooke and J. Vincent, *The Governing Passion: Cabinet Government and Party Politics in Britain, 1885-86* (New York, 1974); P. O'Farrell, *England and Ireland since 1800* (Bungay, 1975); M. Barker, *Gladstone and Radicalism: the Reconstruction of Liberal policy in Britain, 1885-94* (Hassocks, 1975), pp.56-8; D. Hamer, *Liberal Politics in the Age of Gladstone and Rosebery: a study in Leadership and Policy* (1972); Savage, 'The General Election of 1886', passim.

[13] J. Loughlin, *Gladstone, Home Rule and the Ulster Question 1882-93* (Dublin, 1986); O'Day, *Reactions to Irish Nationalism*, passim; Parry, *Rise and Fall*, passim.

[14] See for example E. Feuchtwanger, *Gladstone* (Basingstoke, 1975); H. Matthew, *Gladstone 1809-1898* (Oxford, 1997); R. Shannon, *Gladstone. Heroic minister*, 2 vols., (1999); R. Jenkins, *Gladstone* (1995); J. Vincent, *Gladstone and Ireland* (1979); E. Biagini, *Gladstone* (New York, 1999).

[15] P. Davis, 'The Liberal Unionist Party and the Irish Policy of Lord Salisbury's Government 1886-1892', *Historical Journal* (1975); G. Phillips, 'The Whig Lords and Liberalism, 1886-1893', *Historical Journal* (1981); G. Searle, *County before Party: Coalition and the Idea of National Government in Modern Britain, 1885-1987* (London, 1995); W. Lubenow, *Parliamentary Politics and the Home Rule Crisis* (Oxford, 1988); J. Cornford, 'The transformation of Conservatism in the late 19th century', *Victorian Studies* (1963); G. Goodman, 'Liberal Unionism: the Revolt of the Whigs', *Victorian Studies* (1959), pp.173-89; France, 'Salisbury and the Unionist Alliance'; Fair, 'From Liberal to Conservative'; Fraser, 'The Liberal Unionist Alliance'.

[16] P. Lynch, *The Liberal Party in Rural England 1885-1914* (Oxford, 2003); A. Windscheffel, *Popular Conservatism in Imperial London, 1868-1906* (Woodbridge, 2007).

[17] J. Howarth, 'The Liberal revival in Northamptonshire, 1880-1895: a case study in late Nineteenth Century elections', *Historical Journal* (1969).

focuses on the wider influence of the Irish issue throughout the period, including on the language of popular organisations like the NLF, and its impact on particular regional and Nonconformist discourses.[18] Unfortunately, only Lynch and Howarth's works contain much analysis of platform speech. Biagini concentrates chiefly on party literature, writings, and memoirs, and Windscheffel's evidence is mainly drawn from press editorials and election addresses. On Gladstone, Joseph Meisel, H.C.G. Matthew, and Graham Goodlad have taken D.A. Hamer's earlier work on the Grand Old Man's broader political and cultural impact further by investigating the ways in which his name was used by constituency Liberals as a rallying call, and as an embodiment of their creed and ideology.[19] Andrew Robertson has also touched upon Gladstone's reception and portrayal in the press, and most recently Ruth Clayton Windscheffel has extended the debate to popular visual imagery.[20] Once again, however, these studies contain only minimal engagement with election speeches, relying mainly on newspaper editorials, letters, memoirs, and testimonies.[21] Finally, on Liberal Unionism, there have been few recent publications besides McDonald's study of Paisley and Wesley Ferris' psephological work. However, there are two important PhD dissertations by Ian Cawood and Victoria Barbary, both of which contain healthy engagement with platform speeches.[22]

Overall, the historiographical situation leaves something to be desired. Recent studies have made promising headway, but a reluctance to engage with platform speeches in particular has prevented recent historians saying too much about the speaking campaigns of 1886 and 1892. This chapter aims to redress this imbalance. It will begin by intervening in a debate which dominates both old and new historiography: Home Rule and Gladstone. This can be divided into three separate questions. The first is simply whether Home Rule, and the Irish issue in general, really dominated

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[18] E. Biagini, *British Democracy and Irish Nationalism 1876–1906* (Cambridge, 2007), pp. 20, 53, 59-60, 71-72, 75-77, 183.

[19] D. A. Hamer, 'Gladstone : the making of a political myth', *Victorian Studies*, (1978), pp. 29-50; J. Meisel, *Public Speech and the culture of public life in the age of Gladstone* (New York, 2001); H. Matthew, 'Rhetoric and Politics' in P. Waller (ed.), in *Politics and Social Change in Modern Britain* (Brighton, 1987); G. Goodlad, 'Gladstone and his Rivals: Popular Liberal Perceptions of the Party Leadership in the Political Crisis of 1885-1886', in E. Biagini and A. Reid (eds.), *Currents of Radicalism: Popular Radicalism, organized Labour and Party Politics in Britain, 1850-1914* (Cambridge, 1991), pp.178-82.

[20] A. Robertson, *The Language of Democracy: Political Rhetoric in the United States and Britain, 1790-1900* (Charlottesville, 2005), pp.164-80; R. Windscheffel, 'Politics, Portraiture, & Power: reassessing the public image of William Ewart Gladstone', in M. McCormack (ed.), *Public Men: Masculinity and Politics in Modern Britain* (Basingstoke, 2007), pp. 93-122.

[21] Meisel and Matthew's works generally concern the culture of speechmaking, the press, and the platform, rather than content analysis. Hamer's article deals with the 'popular myth' of Gladstone, and prioritises physical manifestations of his cult of personally (e.g. cartoons and memorabilia) above linguistic ones. Goodlad's chapter is mostly composed of third person accounts demonstrating Gladstone's influence on his party – and his sway over voters – in 1886, rather than his influence on the speeches of others.

[22] C. MacDonald, 'Locality, Tradition and Language in the Evolution of Scottish Unionism: A Case Study, Paisley, 1886-1910', in C. MacDonald (ed.) *Unionist Scotland, 1800-1997* (Edinburgh, 1998); W. Ferris, 'The Candidates of the Liberal Unionist Party, 1886-1912', *Parliamentary History* (2011); V. Barbary, 'From Platform to Polling Booth': Political Leadership and Popular Politics in Bolton and Bury 1868-1906', (PhD, Cambridge, 2007); Cawood, 'The Lost Party'. See also I. Cawood, 'The 1892 General Election and the eclipse of the Liberal Unionists' *Parliamentary History* (2010).

election campaigns in 1886, 1892, and subsequently. Although historians have not directly clashed on this matter, approximations of the importance of Ireland in electoral politics vary greatly from account to account. Windscheffel, Fair, Barker, Hamer, Parry, and others take perhaps the most common view: that 1886 was dominated by Home Rule, but that it was far less important by 1892.[23] O'Day and especially Biagini, however, take a quite different position, arguing that the Irish issue was a cornerstone of debate in both high and low politics throughout the whole 1867-1914 period.[24] Finally, there are historians who see Home Rule as much less important. Lynch and Meisel both suggest that it was not a compulsory subject in the constituencies even in 1886, and that candidates were often able to successfully campaign on other issues.[25] They find support from Howarth and Shannon who similarly see nothing automatic about the grassroots adoption of Home Rule, and give examples of constituencies where, in Shannon's words, the issue 'did not take fire'.[26] Although these varying approximations of importance do not constitute a debate as such, the lack of agreement muddies any discussion from the outset. Thus, it is first necessary for this chapter to provide an overarching quantification of the Irish issue's visibility in electoral language throughout the 1880-1910 period to provide a firm foundation for what follows. This quantification demonstrates that Ireland dwarfed other issues in East Anglia and on the national stage in 1886, and that it was also the dominant issue in 1892. In the other elections in the period, however, it was seldom mentioned by either party until 1906, where Conservative speakers revived it as an important part of their platforms, albeit to limited Liberal reply. Overall, this analysis suggests that Ireland was an explosive but transient issue.

The second question is qualitative, and concerns the popularity of Home Rule, and to what extent it inspired grassroots Liberals. On this, there has been a clear historiographical clash. The traditional view – particularly associated with Parry, Hamer, and Barker – is that Home Rule cast a pall over Liberal spirits in the constituencies, and led to a considerable drop in the enthusiasm of activists, the turnout of supporters, and the party's appetite to contest seats. Parry contends that even Gladstone's supporters 'did not care much for Home Rule', Hamer detected 'no enthusiasm', and Barker describes the issue as 'an electoral encumbrance'.[27] This consensus has recently been challenged by Biagini, who contends that Liberal enthusiasm for Home Rule went well beyond loyalty to Gladstone, and that the party widely saw it as a great cause of justice, and took it to the electorate with panache.[28] He is not alone, for the earlier works of O'Day and Heyck also note considerable zeal amongst

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[23] Windscheffel, *Popular Conservatism*, p.56; Fair, 'From Liberal to Conservative', p.314; Hamer, 'The Irish Question', pp.246-51; O'Day, *Irish Home Rule*, pp.122-3, 145; Parry, *Rise and Fall*, pp. 302-3; Barker, *Gladstone and Radicalism*, pp.56-8.

[24] Biagini, *British Democracy and Irish Nationalism*, ch.1; O'Day, *Irish Home Rul*, chs.3-9.

[25] Lynch, *Liberal Party*, pp. 188, 135, 143-4, 157; Meisel, *Public Speech*, pp.227-28.

[26] Shannon, *Age of Salisbury*, p.374, 376; Howarth, 'The Liberal Revival', p.97.

[27] Parry, *Rise and Fall*, pp. 302-3; Hamer, 'The Irish Question', p.254; Barker, *Gladstone and Radicalism*, p.75. This view is also shared by McDonald, 'Locality, Tradition, and Language'. p.57; Shannon, *Age of Salisbury*, pp.372-3; Lynch, *Liberal Party*, pp.118-55; Cawood, 'The Lost Party', pp.208-9, 211.

[28] Biagini, *British Democracy and Irish Nationalism*, p.3.

radicals.[29] This chapter's contribution to this debate will be to reassess the popular presentation of the Irish issue in these two elections. It contends that Home Rule was enthusiastically forwarded by Liberals in East Anglia in 1886, and articulated in terms of justice, freedom, and righting the 'wrongs' of history. However, there were a number of counter-arguments used by Unionists – in particular on land purchase, the effect of the National League, and the abandonment of Protestants in Ulster – which they very seldom engaged with, and did not rebut. Moreover, Liberal language (especially in 1892) became more fragmented and self-referential, and Home Rule became firmly associated with the party's problems: in particular their weakened reforming credentials, and their inability to govern independently without Parnell's support. The Unionists, meanwhile, had no such loss of confidence, and continued even in 1892 to hammer home what were comparatively simple, but clear arguments: that Home Rule meant the separation of the Union and Empire, and could lead to civil war and violence. They also created an inseparable link between the Irish policy and Gladstone which made it difficult for it to ever escape his shadow. Indeed, the fact that many of these classic bogies were wheeled out again in 1906 and December 1910 perhaps bore testimony to their perceived potency as platform weapons. Overall, it seems reasonable to conclude that Home Rule was a more enduring rhetorical resource for the Unionists than it was for Liberals, and the arguments of Heyck, O'Day, and Biagini – which focus only on Liberalism – give a misleading picture. In this respect, this chapter supports the recent reassessments of Thackeray and Jackson which re-emphasise the enduring importance of Home Rule to Unionist appeal in the Edwardian period.[30]

The third and final question concerns the impact of Gladstone himself, and how far these two contests were more about him than his Irish policy. John Bright famously remarked in opposition to the bill in 1886 that 'if not for the great personal influence of Mr. Gladstone, not 20 men could be found in Parliament to vote for his proposals'.[31] Many historians have taken the same view: that Gladstone's personal appeal was instrumental in selling Home Rule to a sceptical party and a still more sceptical electorate.[32] However, many others (especially his biographers) see the Gladstone of 1892 especially as a sadly diminished figure who lacked the vast popularity and influence that he enjoyed in the elections held in the wake of his Midlothian campaigns of 1879-80 and 1884-85.[33] Parry has even

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[29] O'Day, *Irish Home Rule*, p.155; T. Heyck, 'Home Rule, radicalism and the Liberal Party, 1886-1895', in O'Day (ed.) *Reactions to Irish Nationalism*, pp.280-1.

[30] D. Jackson, *Popular Opposition to Irish Home Rule in Edwardian Britain* (Liverpool, 2009), chs.3–5; D. Thackeray, 'Rethinking the Edwardian Crisis of Conservatism', *Historical Journal* (2011), pp.202-213.

[31] *The Morning Post*, 17 Jun 1886.

[32] Parry, *Rise and Fall*, p.302; Goodlad, 'Gladstone and his Rivals', pp.179-80; O'Day, *Irish Home Rule*, p.174; O'Farrell, *England and Ireland since 1800*, p.94; J. Lawrence, *Speaking for the People: Party, Language, and Popular Politics in England, 1867-1914* (Cambridge, 1998), p.195.

[33] Hamer, *Liberal Politics*, pp.168-75; Barker, *Gladstone and Radicalism*, p.56, 160-62; J. Dunbabin, 'Electoral Reforms and their outcome in the United Kingdom 1865-1900', in T. Gourvish and A. O'Day (eds.), *Later Victorian Britain* (1988), p.122; Jenkins, *Gladstone*, pp.581-3; Matthew, *Gladstone*, pp.579-81; Biagini, *Gladstone*, p.65; Howarth, 'Liberal Revival', pp.117-8; Shannon, *Age of Salisbury*, p.218; Parry, *Rise and Fall*, p.277.

suggested that the Liberals might have fared better with a different leader after 1885, perhaps Hartington.[34] These differing views of Gladstone's leadership from 1886 invite a reassessment of the Grand Old Man's popular profile and his impact on party language in these four elections. Using the East Anglian corpus, I will investigate his prominence in speech relative to his rivals, the issues with which he was associated, and the reactions of Norfolk and Suffolk audiences (as noted in the press) to mentions of his name. Such an analysis will shed light on whether the Home Rule Gladstone of 1886 and 1892 still inspired grassroots Liberals as the Midlothian Gladstone of 1880 had done. This chapter argues that the elections of 1886 and (more surprisingly) 1892 were no muted swansong, but showed the Grand Old Man at the peak of his dominance, with his name continuing to represent an important rhetorical resource for East Anglian Liberal speakers. However, it also suggests – as with the previous debate on Home Rule – that holistic estimations of value and power in electoral discourse must consider both parties rather than just one. In this respect, the chapter further suggests that Gladstone's leadership was perhaps a bigger asset for Conservatives than it was for Liberals.

* * *

This chapter's second intervention concerns a much more neglected debate: the impact of Liberal Unionism on the popular images of Conservatism and Liberalism.[35] The realignments in both main parties following the Liberal Unionist's secession are well-covered in high political accounts, but are disappointingly absent from the recent studies of language. There is much to commend in Cawood's recent thesis and articles, and he – and Barbary – are right to contend that the notion of a distinct Liberal Unionist identity that found voice on the platform has not been taken seriously enough.[36] However, his argument is weakened by almost exclusively focusing on the language of Liberal Unionists themselves: a discourse dwarfed in size and significance by those of the Conservatives and Liberals. It is perhaps not especially surprising that Liberal Unionists thought *themselves* a distinct political and intellectual force, but this did not mean the larger parties – who controlled the vast majority of platforms – would similarly flatter them. Moreover, a focus on Liberal Unionism in isolation sheds little light on the alliance's wider impact on the image of the two main parties, which is arguably where the more important debate is to be had.

This chapter will contribute to this debate by reassessing two important questions where historians have disagreed. The first concerns the speed with which the Liberal Unionists were

[34] Parry, *Rise and Fall*, pp.260-2.

[35] One thing this dissertation does not attempt to cover in detail is Liberal Unionist language itself. Cawood and Barbary have already taken important steps to shedding light on this area, and there were insufficient Liberal Unionist candidatures in East Anglia to enable anything approaching a substantial corpus to be compiled. A Liberal Unionist corpus could well be an asset to future scholars, but it would almost certainly have to incorporate speeches from a much wider geography to gain a sufficient word-count.

[36] Cawood, 'The Lost Party', pp.5-26; Barbary, 'From Platform to Polling Booth', pp.ii, 21.

subsumed into Conservative ranks, and converted from bitter opponents to natural allies. That this happened eventually is not in doubt (the parties formally merged in 1912), but historians disagree markedly on the timing. The more popular reading emphasises the continuing separateness of the two parties. O'Day and Lubenow both stress the extent to which they retained jealous distinctions in 1886 and 1892, whereas Cawood, McDonald, Ferris and Barbary go further still, contending that these differences endured even into the twentieth century in some areas.[37] Fair, Marsh, and France take the opposite view: that the Liberal Unionists were subordinated remarkably quickly, showing little desire for an independent voice, and marching through the lobbies with the Tories with nigh-clockwork reliability.[38] This chapter finds greater support for the second interpretation, and argues that Liberal Unionists were swiftly portrayed by both main parties as simply an appendage of Conservatism. This assimilation was well underway even in 1886, and was more or less complete by 1892. Tory speakers stressed the two party's similarities, and – perhaps more crucially – Liberals wasted no time in attacking their former allies with surprising panache. This firefight engulfed the Liberal Unionists in a partisan and bi-polar electoral discourse where there was little room for a third distinct national political force which could not appeal – as did the Irish Nationalists and (later) the Labour Party – to a distinct geographical or sociological support base. Of course, many Liberal Unionist MPs retained their own constituency identities for many years, but – from the bulk of platforms occupied by Liberal and Conservatives speakers – they were credited with little distinct identity even in 1886.

This chapter does not, however, argue that Liberal Unionism was unimportant. The 1886 secession detonated crucial realignments within the Conservative and Liberal parties which affected both the presentation and substance of their platform appeals. Indeed, a number of historians have suggested that Liberal Unionist influence pushed the Tories towards progressivism and reform, and ultimately bequeathed them the standard of moderate Liberalism previously carried by statesmen such as Palmerston and Russell, which had been discarded by the radicals. Some readings even credit the Liberal Unionists with direct influence over Conservative policymaking, and Salisbury's move towards social reform in the late 1880s.[39] Most, however, emphasise the new opportunity they afforded to appeal to moderate opinion as Unionists rather than just as Conservatives, with Parry and Cawood going so far as to suggest that the ceding of propertied, manly, administrative, and laissez-faire doctrine ultimately helped transform the Conservatives into the natural party of government for decades to come.[40]

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[37] O'Day, *Irish Home Rule*, pp.123-4, Lubenow, *Home Rule Crisis*, p.256; Cawood, 'The Lost Party', pp.268-9; MacDonald, 'Locality, Tradition, and Language', pp.58-60; Ferris, 'Liberal Unionist Party', pp.149-54; Barbary, 'From Platform to Polling Booth', chs. 5-7.

[38] Fair, 'From Liberal to Conservative', pp.299-300, 313; France, 'Salisbury and the Unionist Alliance', p.230, 232; P. Marsh, *The Discipline of Popular Government: Lord Salisbury's Domestic Statecraft 1881-1902* (Hassocks, 1978), p.260.

[39] C. Shannon, 'The Ulster Liberal Unionists and Local Government Reform, 1885-1898', in O'Day (ed.) *Reactions to Irish Nationalism*, p.47, 363; Fraser, 'The Liberal Unionist Alliance', p.62.

[40] Fair, 'From Liberal to Conservative', p.311; Marsh, *Popular Government*. p.241; Blewett, *Peers*, p.15; Howarth, 'Liberal Revival', p.98; Parry, *Rise and Fall*, pp.302-3, 310-11; Cawood, 'The Lost Party', pp.284-6.

How this widely-cited vote-winning influence actually found voice on the platform, however, remains rather less clear, and historians have found it easier to imply, rather than prove, its existence. Indeed, it has been questioned whether Conservatives were in fact influenced at all: France has argued that the development of a 'liberal-Conservative' party which appealed to whigs and moderates was planned by Salisbury and Northcote since the early 1880s, and Windscheffel, Roberts, and Lawrence also note a marked shift in tone in 1885.[41] This view – of an early birth of progressive Conservatism – finds further support in this chapter, for there is little evidence that East Anglian Conservatives stressed their reformist or progressive credentials any more in 1886 or 1892 than they did in 1885. However, the Liberal Unionists *were* important to Tory image, but in another way. They enabled the Conservatives to exploit the rhetorical resource of political independence, and thus to pose as a 'national party': as a pragmatic coalition of men who had laid down party differences to defeat the destabilising threat Home Rule. This was a presentational strategy that Conservatives widely used until 1906, and, although recognised by historians, has yet to be fully explored.[42]

The effect of the Liberal Unionist secession on their parent party has also been of wide historical interest, with the consensus being that the purge hastened the radicalisation of parliamentary and popular Liberalism.[43] Despite this transformation, historians have nevertheless overwhelmingly taken the view that the Newcastle Programme of 1891 failed to galvanise the party, despite the radicalism of its proposals and its authorship by the NLF. Most regard it simply as an incoherent omnibus which gave a divided and desperate party something, besides Home Rule, to present to the electorate.[44] These two dominant views, while not necessarily mutually exclusive, are hard to rationalise. This chapter advocates a more positive interpretation of the Newcastle Programme, one which is implied (if not explicitly stated) in several recent accounts.[45] It argues that historians – swayed by Gladstone's unenthusiasm, the programme's timidity in comparison to Chamberlain's in 1885, and the meagre achievements of the 1892-95 Liberal ministry – have dismissed the Newcastle

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[41] France, 'Salisbury and the Unionist Alliance', p.223; Windschefel, *Popular Conservatism*, p.56; M. Roberts, '"Villa Toryism" and Popular Conservatism in Leeds, 1885-1902', *Historical Journal* (2006), p.227; J. Lawrence, 'Class and Gender in the making of Urban Toryism, 1880-1914', *English Historical Review* (1993).

[42] This argument has been made most strongly by Windscheffel, *Popular Conservatism*, pp. 55, 299-300, 314. It is also alluded to by Fair, 'From Liberal to Conservative', p.315; R. Jay, *Joseph Chamberlain: a Political Study* (Oxford, 1981), pp.178-80.

[43] Hamer, *Liberal Politics*, pp.124-6, 'The Irish Question', p.246; Heyck, 'Home Rule', p.264; France, 'Salisbury and the Unionist Alliance', p.257; Lubenow, *Home Rule Crisis*, p.264; Barker, *Gladstone and Radicalism*, pp.88-89.

[44] Hamer, *Liberal Politics*, pp.173-4; Barker, *Gladstone and Radicalism*, p.205; O'Day, *Irish Home Rule*, p.145; Heyck, 'Home Rule', p.281; Jenkins, *Gladstone*, p.581; Dunbabin, 'Electoral Reforms', p.122; Fraser, 'The Liberal Unionist Alliance', p.53; Lawrence, *Speaking for the People*, pp.194-5; M. Ostrogorski, *Democracy and the Organisation of Political Parties* (2 vols, 1902), vol. 1, pp.316-7.

[45] Cawood, 'The Lost Party', pp. 246-7, 250, 261; 'The 1892 Election', p.337, 353. Cawood describes the Liberal party of 1892 as 'reinvigorated by the Newcastle Programme'. Windscheffel, *Popular Conservatism*, pp.60-61 also demonstrates the appeal of 'programme politics' in London in 1892. Finally, Lynch, *Liberal Party*, ch.4, makes much of the idea that the Liberals were revived in the 1890s by a return to their earlier radical agenda.

proposals' popular appeal too easily. After all, the Liberals *did* manage a significant revival in 1892 despite the twin encumbrances of Home Rule and the absence of the Liberal Unionists. Indeed, the revival was especially pronounced in the 158 rural and semi-rural constituencies where the party had been almost wiped out in 1886.[46] It seems difficult, therefore – especially when we consider the success of Chamberlain's proposals in 1885 in the countryside – to not take seriously the idea that radical programme politics *in general* may have strongly appealed to Liberals in rural regions like East Anglia. Indeed, this chapter finds that the language of radicalism that had dominated the region in 1885 declined markedly in 1886, only to resurface once more in 1892.

[46] Lynch, *Liberal Party*, p.235. Overall, Liberals were victorious in 58 out of 158 rural and semi-rural seats in 1892: more than double the 28 they won in 1886. That the Liberals achieved almost 40% of their 80 net gains in only a quarter of the seats gives some indication of how strong the rural revival was. In rural and semi-rural seats, just shy of 20% were Liberal gains, whereas in the rest of the country, just 10% were.

III

Home Rule

The degree to which Ireland featured consistently as an election issue throughout the 1880-1910 period has, as discussed above, been the subject of some disagreement. This chapter's first task, therefore, is to use the corpus to analyse the issue's visibility during these nine general elections. We can make a good deal of initial headway simply by tracking the keywords 'Ireland', 'Irish', and 'Home Rule' on a party-by-party, election-by-election basis in East Anglia, and on the national stage, as shown in Figure 3.1 below:

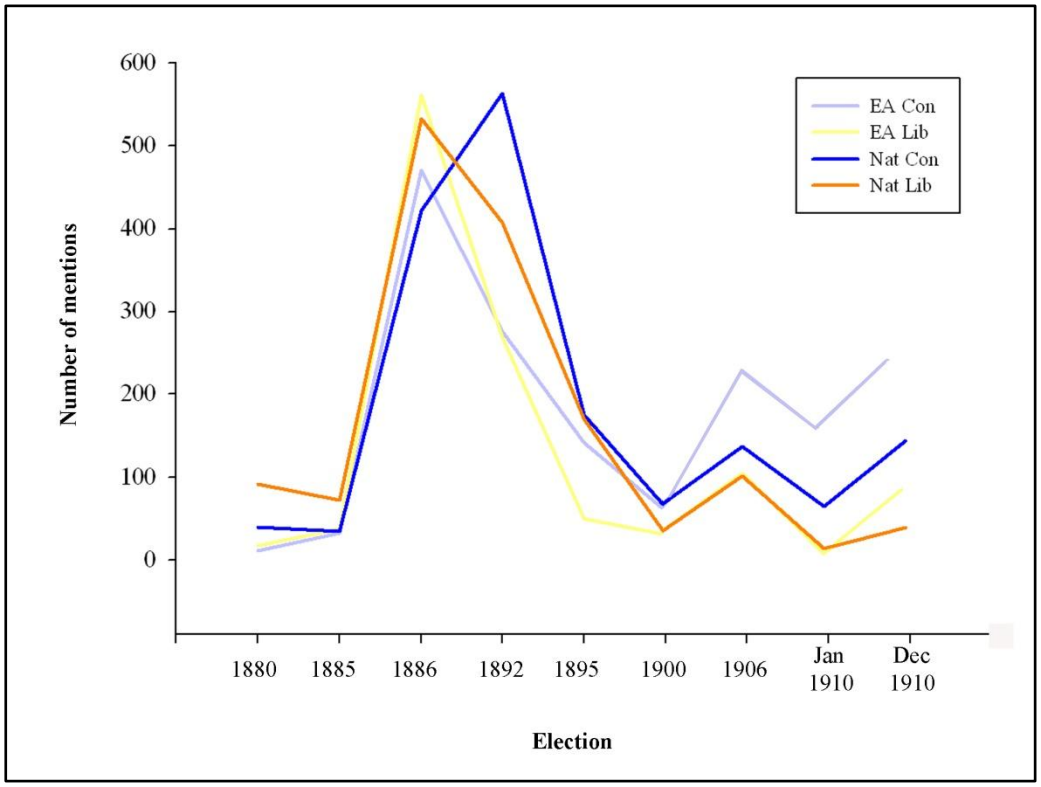

Figure 3.1: Ireland, 1880-1910.

See Appendix 3.1.

Figure 3.1 clearly shows the striking dominance of Ireland in 1886. In East Anglia and on the national stage – amongst both parties – the issue was mentioned around 500 times in each 50,000 word election subsample. The lemma 'Ireland' alone comprised around one percent of all words uttered in 1886: an extraordinarily high reading. The only other election issues in the period which come close to matching it are the Boer War in 1900 and Tariff Reform in January 1910.[47] While the high scores for 1886 are hardly a surprise in themselves, the readings for 1892 are much more noteworthy, and suggest, even after six years, that the Irish issue maintained much of its visibility, especially on the national stage. The importance of the 1892 figures is more fully demonstrated when they are compared

[47] See Appendices 4.3 and 5.5B.

to those for the other Victorian elections, which are generally extremely low. Ireland still had some salience in 1895, but in 1880, 1885, and 1900, it scored well behind other contemporary issues in East Anglia, such as farming in 1880 and free education in 1885.[48] Even the comparatively obscure Railway Servants Bill of 1895 attracted a not dissimilar number of mentions from Liberal speakers.[49] In the Edwardian period, the issue did resurface in 1906 and especially December 1910 on the back of the 'dollar dictator' scandal, but the revival was heavily biased towards Conservative platforms.

Overall, this graph gives the period a slightly unexpected orientation which does not wholly correspond with the picture painted by historians. The suggestion of Meisel, Lynch, Howarth, and Shannon that the Irish issue was not compulsory material for platform speeches in 1886 seems particularly doubtful. Indeed, Meisel's argument that it was only important when a constituency contained a large Irish population seems highly problematic when one also considers that East Anglia's Irish population was amongst the smallest in any English region. The view that Ireland declined markedly in importance in 1892 is also qualified by these readings, which show its continued salience, even amongst Liberal speakers who, we are told, regarded it as a 'skeleton' to be hidden by more populist policies within the party's general programme. However, the argument of Biagini and O'Day – that Ireland was central to political platforms throughout the Victorian period – is perhaps hit hardest by these findings which instead suggest that it was a storm that engulfed two elections, and was not a central issue in local or national election speeches in 1880, 1885, 1895, or 1900. On the other hand, the recent argument of Thackeray and especially Jackson on the continued importance of Home Rule to popular Edwardian Conservatism is strongly corroborated. Rather than being 'dead as a door nail' as Peter Clarke suggests, the Home Rule issue returned in 1906 and December 1910, even if only one party was really talking about it.[50]

Having established the ebb and flow of the Irish issue throughout the period, we can move on to the equally crucial question of its popular presentation in 1886 and 1892. In particular, we can assess to what extent the dominant view – that Home Rule was an albatross to Liberalism in these two contests – is a fair one. There were (see Figure 3.3 below) six main areas of clash between the parties in East Anglia. The first concerned coercion and violence. Liberals such as Goodwin (Bury) complained that a policy of coercion was to 'govern Ireland by the spy and the policeman...by the imprisonment of the innocent along with the guilty, on mere suspicion' whereas Conservatives maintained that a firm hand was necessary to save Ireland from 'civil war' (Cator), becoming 'a savage wilderness' (Lloyd-Anstruther) or 'infested with foreign dynamitards' (Fellowes).[51] The second was the stability of the Union, which for Liberals like Stevenson represented 'a real union: a union of hearts between England and Ireland, and not that sham union which has existed for the last 86 years' whereas for Conservatives, Birkbeck's pledge – to 'never submit to have flag torn down and Empire

[48] See Appendix 2.2 and 2.9.

[49] The Railway Servants Bill (1895) was mentioned 28 times by Liberals, just 22 behind Home Rule (50).

[50] P. Clarke, *Lancashire and the New Liberalism* (Cambridge, 1971), pp.372-3.

[51] *Bury and Lowestoft Journal*, 13 Jul 1886; *Norwich Argus*, 11 Jul 1892; *Ipswich Journal*, 26 Jun 1886; *Lowestoft Conservative Reporter*, 6 Jul 1886.

dismembered' – was typical.[52] The third clash was anchored in competing notions of justice, and was often twinned with the fourth, on the troubled history of Ireland since 1800. Tillett (Norwich) lauded the Liberal mission 'to give the Irish people, who have been cruelly wronged and misgoverned for centuries, that measure of justice which they ask' whereas Hervey (Bury) rubbished such readings of the past as 'falsified history'.[53] Indeed, a Norfolk Conservative presented his own 'study of the history of the Irish people' which instead suggested that 'you may not trust the ascendancy of the Roman Catholics...you need the absolute ascendancy of the Imperial Parliament'.[54] The fifth clash revolved around religious tensions: Everett (Woodbridge) bemoaned that 'a Catholic Irishman could not enjoy the fruits of his industry, nor prosper, nor be free, in his native land' whereas Holland (Eye) warned against 'placing the Loyalists of Ulster under the heel of the Catholic priesthood'.[55] The sixth, perhaps inevitably, was Gladstone himself, which this chapter will later deal with.

To gain a holistic understanding of the wide-ranging and often fiery debate on Home Rule in 1886 and 1892, this section employs three corpus-driven analyses. The first is simply some basic keyword tracking. The second is an aggregate KWIC analysis of East Anglian speakers similar to those used in the previous chapter for the Unauthorised Programme. Focusing only on sentences containing 'Ireland', it establishes the most common contexts in which it was mentioned, and the issues, values, traditions and personalities with which it was associated. The third is a supplementary 'cluster analysis' which looks purely at vocabulary. Using special mini-corpora comprised only of these KWICs, it uses word-frequency-lists to find the most common words which appeared in sentences where 'Ireland' was mentioned.

Appendices 3.1, 3.2, and 3.3 give us a general flavour of the language of the 1886 and 1892 platforms. The keywords in these appendices were selected to investigate the general impact of Home Rule on campaign discourse: to give a broad overview (for example) of how far Conservatives championed the cause of the Loyalists, the degree to which Liberals were preoccupied with condemning coercion, and whether religious and imperial language surged. Such an analysis is rather crude, but can potentially illuminate some interesting trends. The scores for ten keywords from these appendices are shown as Figure 3.2 below. Note that the graphs also show a 'period average' in addition to the 1886 and 1892 readings: this is simply the average bi-partisan score for East Anglia throughout 1880-1910 period, and is there to add context:

[52] *East Anglian Daily Times*, 24 Jun 1886; *Lowestoft Conservative Reporter*, 6 Jul 1886.

[53] *Eastern Daily Pres*, 29 Jun 1886; *Bury Free Press*, 3 Jul 1886.

[54] *Lynn Advertiser*, 14 Jun 1886.

[55] *East Anglian Daily Times*, 12 Jul 1892; *Ipswich Journal*, 14 May 1992.

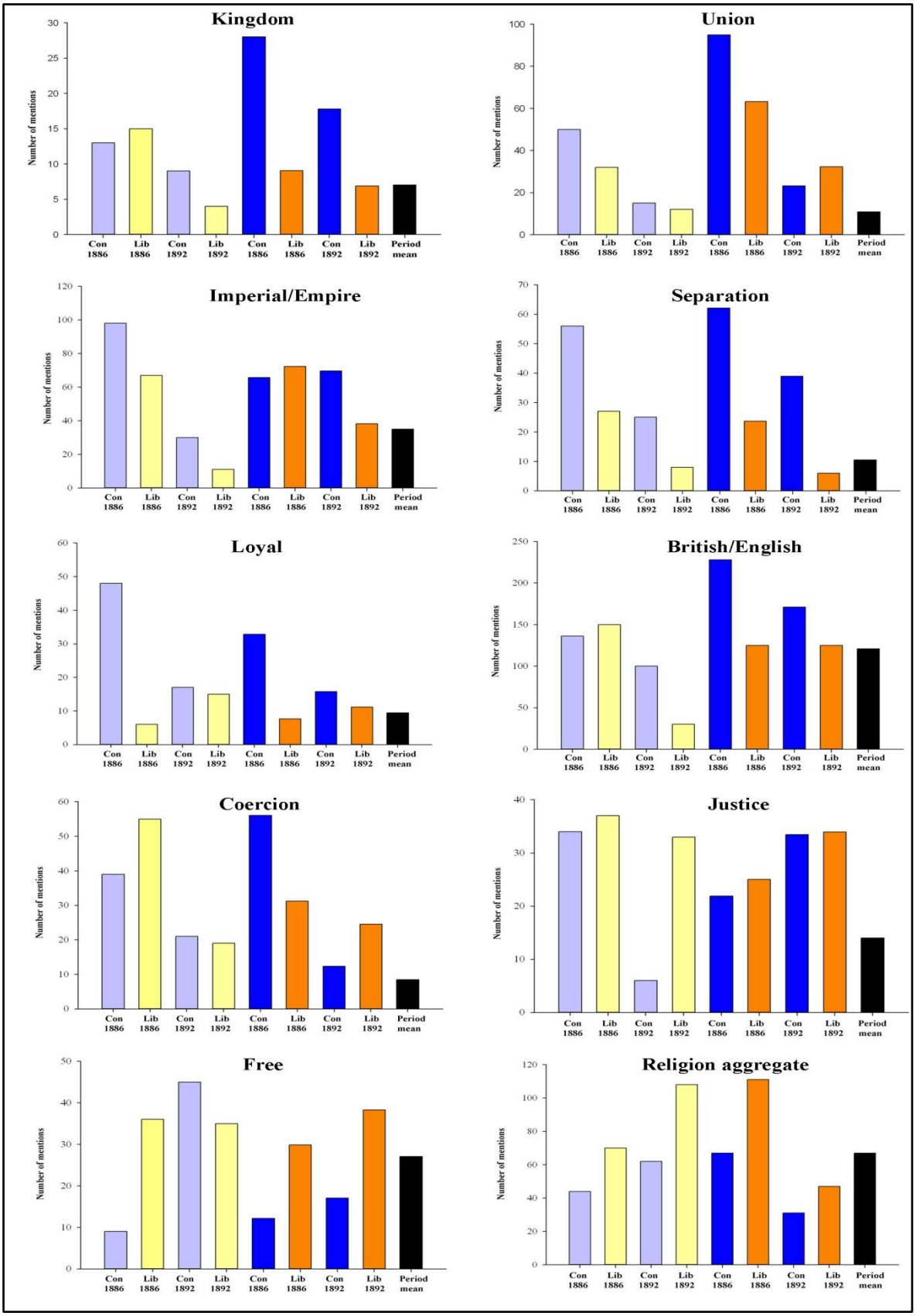

Figure 3.2: The General Impact of Home Rule on Party Language, 1886-1892

See Appendices 3.1, 3.2, and 3.3.

The first six lemmas shown on Figure 3.2 ('Kingdom', 'Union', 'Imperial/Empire', 'Separation', 'Loyal', and 'British/English') are areas we would expect Conservative speakers to emphasise in these two elections, and they do. They lead the Liberals substantially on 'separation' on both a local and national level, and hold a similar advantage for 'loyal', especially in 1886. For 'Union', 'Kingdom', 'British/English' and 'Imperial/Empire' the picture is also similar, with the Conservatives ahead in the vast majority of instances. They are also consistently ahead of the period average. All this is not particularly interesting in itself, but becomes more notable when we turn to the three lemmas – 'Coercion', 'Justice', and 'Free' – where we might expect the Liberals to turn the tables. On 'coercion', the Liberals enjoy only a very slight net advantage, and are often behind their opponents. On 'justice' – a cause which formed the core of the Liberal case for Home Rule according to Biagini – we again see a stalemate, with the notable exception of a commanding Liberal lead in East Anglia in 1892. Liberal scores for both words in 1886 and 1892 are high in the context of the period, but the rises were generally reciprocated by Conservatives. Indeed, even on the final two graphs, which show clear Liberal advantages for the keyword 'Free' and amongst a taxonomy of six religious keywords, a good portion of their advantage is on account of Conservative frequencies falling rather than their own scores rising. Overall, it could be argued that Figure 3.2 suggests that Conservative vocabulary was perhaps more *distinct*: both parties tackled the issue of coercion, and articulated competing visions of justice, but only Conservatives had much to say (for example) on the effect of Home Rule on Loyalists.

This idea – that Liberals failed to interact with important parts of their opponents' platform in 1886 and 1892 – is also reaffirmed when we perform a KWIC context analysis for the lemma 'Ireland' in East Anglia. The results are shown as Figure 3.3 below:

CON 1886	Total (of 402 mentions)	%
Gladstone	42	10
Separation of the Union	40	10
Parnell/National League	38	9
Effect on Loyalists/Ulster	37	9
Justice	32	8
Violence/Civil War	27	7
Effect of Home Rule on rest of Kingdom	21	5
Catholicism/ Catholic priesthood	18	4
Landlords/Land purchase	15	4
Migrant Irish labour	12	3
Empire	11	3
History of Ireland	11	3
Prosperity of Ireland	10	2

CON 1892	Total (of 217 mentions)	%
Gladstone	35	16
State of Ireland 1886-1892	29	13
Violence/Civil war	20	9
Effect on Loyalists/Ulster	19	9
Effect of Home Rule on rest of Kingdom	18	8
Liberal dependence on Nationalists	16	7
Separation of the Union	14	6
Liberal paralysis	12	6
Catholicism/Priesthood	11	5
Local Government Bill	11	5
Justice	9	4
History of Ireland	7	3
Landlords	5	2

LIB 1886	Total (of 492 mentions)	%
Stability of the Union	80	16
Justice	65	13
Coercion	50	10
Gladstone	38	8
History of Ireland	38	8
Prosperity of Ireland	24	5
Details of proposal	13	3
Catholicism/ Catholic priesthood	8	2
Landlords/ Land purchase	6	1
Parnell/National league	5	1

LIB 1892	Total (of 220 mentions)	%
Justice	19	9
Coercion	17	8
Catholicism/Priesthood	17	8
Gladstone	16	7
Liberal paralysis	15	7
History of Ireland	15	7
Stability of the Union	15	7
Virtue of the Irish	12	5
Details of proposal	12	5
Landlords	12	5
Irish Church Disestablishment 1868	12	5
Prosperity of Ireland	7	3
Local Government Bill	7	3
State of Ireland 1886-1892	4	2
Effect of Home Rule on rest of Kingdom	4	2

Figure 3.3: Ireland in East Anglia, 1886-1892: Common Contexts

Figure 3.3 suggests that the six aforementioned areas of clash accounted for around half of the total number of mentions of 'Ireland' in East Anglia in 1886 for both parties. However, it also suggests that there were notable areas where the Liberals seldom engaged their opponents. The first was the bogey of land purchase. The scheme – described by Lloyd-Anstruther (Woodbridge) as 'the most monstrous proposal he ever heard of' – was the subject of 4% of Conservative mentions but barely 1% of Liberal.[56] The second was Parnell's National League, an organisation variously referred to as 'steeped to the lips in treason' and 'rebels and traitors' by Conservatives.[57] This accounted for 9% of Tory mentions and, again, attracted just 1% from Liberals. Thirdly, the Liberals (perhaps unsurprisingly, given the absence of 'loyal' from their vocabulary) barely mentioned the Loyalist minority in Ulster, whereas Conservatives were only too keen to praise 'the loyal and industrious Irish' and 'our brother Protestants': this accounted for 9% of mentions.[58] Finally, the Unionists also lamented the impact of Home Rule on the rest of the United Kingdom (5% mentions) to negligible Liberal reply.

The situation was similar in 1892. While the six areas of clash consumed the majority of mentions on both sides, Conservatives continued to devote considerable attention to Loyalists (9%) and the negative effect of Home Rule on the rest of the Kingdom (8%), once again to very limited Liberal rebuttal. These were also supplemented by two new claims which also went largely uncountered. The first was that Ireland had, in the words of a Norfolk Conservative, been 'peaceful, prosperous and contented' under Salisbury's stewardship since 1886 (13% mentions).[59] The second (7% mentions) was that any incoming Liberal ministry would probably be dependent on the Irish Nationalists for a Commons majority, or as a Norwich speaker put it, 'hounded on by the pack of Irish wolves'.[60] There were of course also some topics where the Liberals enjoyed an advantage: on justice (9%) and Irish landlords (5%) the Unionist response was limited, although neither went entirely unrebutted. Indeed, the only area that Conservative speakers in 1892 more or less wholly ignored were the details of the Home Rule proposal (i.e. how a new Dublin Parliament would function and be elected). However, these technical quibbles were perhaps considered subordinate to the main arguments of principle.

Overall, while East Anglian Liberals might have been enthusiastic about the general principle of Home Rule, they were forced to steer a course through treacherous rhetorical terrain where their opponents felt at home, but where their own speakers feared to tread. This perhaps confirmed the general axiom that when an issue was clearly awkward for a party, their own speakers tended to sideline it, while opponents emphasised it. This was true, for example, with General Gordon's abandonment in Khartoum for Liberals in 1885, and the loss of Gladstone's £6 million treasury surplus

[56] *Ipswich Journal*, 26 Jun 1886.

[57] *Lowestoft Conservative Reporter*, 6 Jul 1886; *Lynn Advertiser*, 21 Jun 1886.

[58] *Ipswich Journal*, 19 Jun 1886 (both references).

[59] *Norwich Argus*, 28 May 1892.

[60] *Norwich Argus*, 21 Jun 1892.

for Conservatives in 1880.[61] Given that constituency speaking campaigns were essentially interactive debates where rebutting opponents was always critical, it seems unlikely that Liberals would have ceded so much ground to the Unionists had they been confident of the electoral purchase of their arguments on Parnell, land purchase, or the effect of Home Rule on Loyalists.[62] Indeed, Conservatives often complained that the Liberals did not engage with them: Dalrymple accused them of 'endeavouring to divert the attention of the electorate, in order to disguise what was actually proposed...by Mr. Gladstone' and Bourke claimed that 'they are endeavouring to raise all sorts of side issues...they are endeavouring to go back to the past history of Ireland... to obscure the issue that is before us'.[63] The Liberals could have no such complaint: on their strongest and most emphasised arguments – coercion, justice, and the history of Ireland – their Conservative opponents *did* nevertheless widely engage them.

That Home Rule was problematic for Liberal speakers is also perhaps demonstrated by the fact that their language, especially in 1892, was strongly self-referential.[64] On 15 (7%) of occasions, East Anglian Liberals also spoke of Home Rule as an obstacle that had to overcome before the party could address other matters. Joseph Arch argued that 'it must be settled before anything of any consequence can be done for this country', Jameson indicated that 'Mr. Gladstone has resolved to proceed with it, in order to give Parliament more time to deal with other matters', whereas Higgins promised 'very important reforms [when] the Irish question was settled.'[65] Such admissions were essentially defensive, and perhaps betrayed a lack of faith in the audience's appetite for further discussion of Home Rule six years after the 1886 debacle. Bedford at Norwich even complained that 'we are taunted that the Irish issue is worn out, that the people are sick of the Irish question' while Conservatives like Lloyd-Anstruther were able to claim that 'they are endeavouring to put...the Irish question into the background, and to bring forward all kinds of promises, which they dangle before the eyes of the electors.'[66] Indeed, this association between Home Rule and problems within the Liberal Party was further compounded by the suggestion that any Liberal ministry would inevitably be forced to rely on the Irish Nationalists to gain a Commons majority.

A final potential weakness in the Liberal defence of Home Rule lay in the party's comparatively fragmented rhetoric. Appendix 3.6 shows a set of word frequency lists for both East Anglian parties for 1886 and 1892, comprised only of the sentences which are included in the KWIC

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[61] General Gordon and Khartoum are referred to just once by Liberals in the national and East Anglian corpora combined in 1885, whereas the Conservatives mentioned them 24 times. In 1880, the budget surplus was mentioned 17 times by Liberals and just three times by Conservatives.

[62] J. Lloyd, *Elections and How to Fight Them* (London, 1905), pp.66-67. Lloyd advises prospective candidates that one of 'the main points' of meetings was to 'demolish the arguments of opponents'.

[63] *Ipswich Journal*, 29 Jun 1886; *Lynn Advertiser*, 7 Jun 1886.

[64] East Anglian Liberals mentioned their own party 248 times in 1892, 39% higher than the bi-partisan average of 179 for the period. Note also in Appendix 3.6 the much higher position of the term 'Liberal' in 1892 relative to the other four columns.

[65] *Lynn News*, 18 Jul 1892; *Bury and Norwich Post*, 2 Jul 1892; *Eastern Daily Press*, 13 May 1892.

[66] *Eastern Evening News*, 12 Jun 1892; *Ipswich Journal*, 2 Jul 1892.

analysis in Figure 3.3 above. It broadly suggests that the core vocabulary used by East Anglian Conservatives to describe Home Rule was concentrated around a smaller set of keywords. The aggregates for the top 20 Conservative nouns which appear in the word frequency lists for 1886 and 1892 are 554 and 561 respectively, whereas for Liberals the equivalent scores are just 440 and 458. By this measure, the Conservative language was around 25% more concentrated in both contests. Indeed, Figure 3.3 above also supports this finding. For 1892, the top five Liberal topics consumed 39% of their vocabulary: 16 percentage points lower than their top five in 1886, and also 16 points less than their Conservative opponents. While more fragmented party language was not automatically a problem in and of itself, historians such as Hamer, Matthew, and Lloyd have suggested that a fractured and multifarious message could weaken a party's ability to attract working class voters whose engagement with politics was more limited.[67] Unfortunately for the Liberals, their platform in 1892 – underpinned by uncertainty over Home Rule and the Newcastle omnibus – was anything but simple.

Overall, this analysis qualifies the view of Heyck, O'Day, and Biagini, who see Home Rule as representing a positive rhetorical resource for Liberal speakers. While appeals were frequent and often enthusiastic, this should not disguise the extent to which it was a deeply problematic issue for the party in 1886 and 1892. A large number of their opponent's arguments were left almost wholly unrebutted, and in 1892 especially the overall party message in East Anglia was scattered. The Irish question also seemed to have become firmly associated with problems in the Liberal Party. In this respect, it seems more likely that the revival in 1892 was achieved in spite of Home Rule rather than because of it. It may well have been (as Biagini puts it) a 'great cause of justice' for Liberals, but it was a still greater source of ammunition for their opponents. Its legacy in East Anglia after 1892 was as a piece of Unionist rhetorical artillery: in the remaining five elections before the Great War, Conservatives mentioned Home Rule 787 times to just 292 responses.

* * *

The final part of this section will deal with Gladstone himself. Historians (as discussed above) are united in stressing his centrality to Liberal platforms in 1880 and 1885, the two contests most affected by his Midlothian campaigns. Dunbabin has written that Gladstone's speeches 'appeared to have enormous influence in the country at large' and Trevor Lloyd that his orations (even in printed form) represented 'hypnotic domination' that infused his supporters with zeal.[68] Indeed, George Henry Jennings – a Liberal candidate – wrote in 1881 that 'if ever I ran short of words…I could just mention 'Gladstone' and they were bound to cheer'.[69] Jospeh Meisel references an account where a staunchly Conservative barrister named Montagu Williams was 'converted' by a speech at Blackheath. Williams

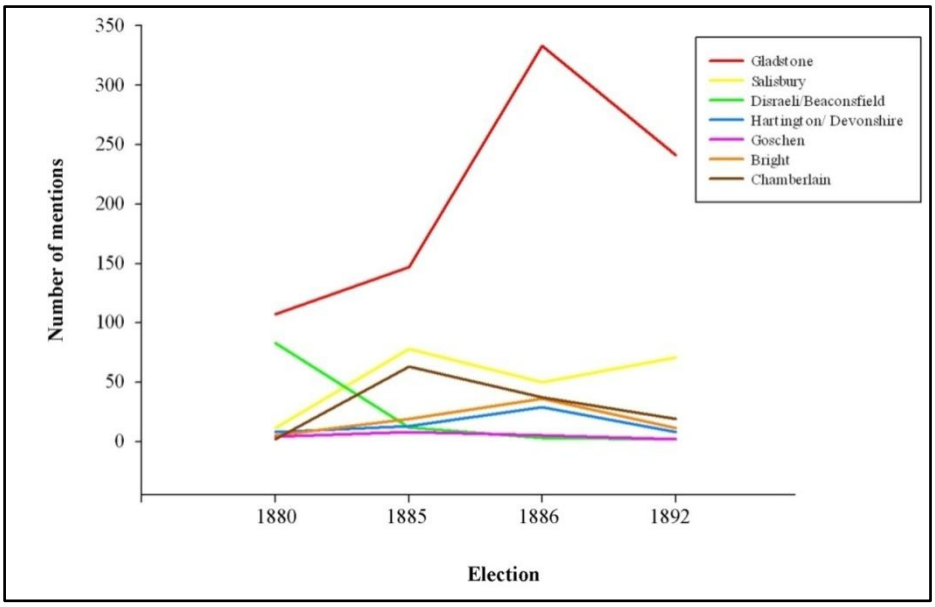
[67] Hamer, *Liberal Politics*, pp.136, 149, 168-75; T. Lloyd, *The General Election of 1880* (Oxford, 1968), p.54, 140; Matthew, 'Rhetoric and Politics', pp.51-53.

[68] Lloyd, *The General Election of 1880*, p.153; Dunbabin, 'Electoral Reforms', p.118.

[69] Lloyd, *The General Election of 1880*, p.153. See also Meisel, *Public Speech*, p.264.

wrote after hearing Gladstone that 'the magician's power had succeeded, and…as I walked away from Blackheath, my political opinions….had undergone a complete change'.[70] This was a process which the press widely described as being 'Gladstonized' and, for Biagini, led directly to the Liberals gaining seats in places that he visited on his speaking tours.[71] How, then, was this inspiring Midlothian Gladstone of 1880 reduced to the Home Rule Gladstone of 1892?[72] To begin this analysis, I have used the East Anglia and National corpora to track references to Gladstone and, for comparison, six of his contemporaries in the four elections between 1880 and 1892. These are shown below as Figure 3.4 (for East Anglia) and Figure 3.5 (for the National stage). For ease of visualisation, both figures include a data table (which shows the readings subdivided by party) and a line graph which displays this data as bi-partisan aggregates.

Politician	CON 1880	LIB 1880	CON 1885	LIB 1885	CON 1886	LIB 1886	CON 1892	LIB 1892
Gladstone	72	35	75	72	188	145	157	84
Salisbury	5	6	41	37	9	41	41	30
Disraeli/Beaconsfield	41	42	10	2	2	1	2	0
Hartington/ Devonshire	5	3	7	6	14	15	3	5
Goschen	3	1	4	4	5	0	2	0
Bright	4	1	9	10	16	20	4	7
Chamberlain	2	0	41	22	21	16	5	14



[70] Meisel, *Public Speech*, p.264.

[71] Biagini, *Gladstone*, p.62, 67; Meisel, *Public Speech*, p.272.

[72] Historians who see Gladstone's popular appeal as diminished in 1892 include Hamer, *Liberal Politics*, pp.168-75, Barker, *Gladstone and Radicalism*, p.56, 160-62, Dunbabin, 'Electoral Reforms', p.122, Jenkins, *Gladstone*, pp.581-3, Matthew, *Gladstone*, p.579-81; Howarth, 'Liberal Revival', pp.117-7; Shannon, *Age of Salisbury*, p.218; Parry, *Rise and Fall*, p.277.

Figure 3.4: Gladstone and his Rivals in East Anglia, 1880-1892

Politician	CON 1880	LIB 1880	CON 1885	LIB 1885	CON 1886	LIB 1886	CON 1892	LIB 1892
Gladstone	44	38	76	32	201	50	226	45
Salisbury	1	21	27	51	23	67	12	32
Disraeli/Beaconsfield	6	31	8	4	15	0	4	2
Hartington/ Devonshire	65	9	20	6	11	31	1	28
Goschen	1	2	15	7	2	13	0	6
Bright	9	5	28	8	6	8	0	3
Chamberlain	2	6	73	6	5	33	1	18

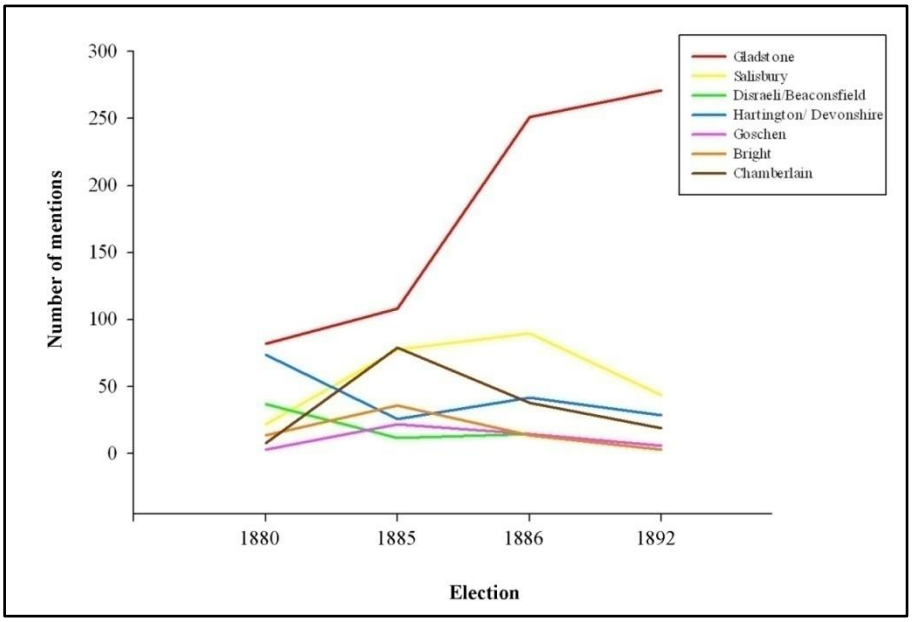


Figure 3.5: Gladstone and his Rivals on the National Stage, 1880-1892

In East Anglia (Figure 3.4) the readings for 1880 show Gladstone as the single biggest figure in politics, but his lead over Disraeli – who played no active part in the campaign – is surprisingly slim. The other leading statesmen on both sides are mentioned just a handful of times. On the national stage (Figure 3.5) Gladstone's slight lead is maintained, although he is nearly equalled by Hartington, which is slightly surprising given the Marquis was barely mentioned in East Anglia. Moving onto 1885, Gladstone's visibility slightly increases in both the local and national corpus. His lead in East Anglia over his nearest rival is large, although this time there are two clear competitors in Salisbury and Chamberlain. On the national stage, Gladstone's advantage is still more precarious, with Salisbury and Chamberlain only slightly behind, and with Bright, Goshen, and Hartington also making some impact. Overall, Gladstone was considerably more popular at the grassroots in East Anglia, where he took 48% and 47% of the total number of mentions for all seven men in 1880 and 1885 respectively. On the national stage, these figures were just 30% and 34% respectively. On balance, it would be fair to describe him as the single most important figure in political speech in these years, but by no means its dominator.

In the two later elections of 1886 and 1892 this picture changes radically. While Gladstone's three nearest rivals remain Salisbury, Chamberlain, and Hartington, his lead increases hugely. In East Anglia, he scores 333 mentions in 1886 and 241 in 1892, and on the national stage, 251 and 271 respectively. None of his rivals with the exception (occasionally) of Salisbury register above 50. Overall, Gladstone consumes 68% and 67% of the total mentions for all seven men in 1886 and 1892 at the grassroots, and 58% and 72% of the total mentions on the national stage. This astonishing new dominance also did not end in 1892: in 1895, the retired Gladstone was still the third most-mentioned Liberal statesman in East Anglia (slightly behind the comparatively invisible William Harcourt and Lord Rosebery) and in 1900, despite the seeming disadvantage of being dead, he nevertheless recovered to reclaim the pole Liberal position.[73] As one of Suffolk's new Liberal Unionist candidates remarked in 1886, 'Mr. Gladstone is the Government because there is nobody else in it'.[74]

Overall, these findings seem somewhat surprising. Historians have strongly linked Gladstone's domination of popular politics and election discourse with the Midlothian campaigns, and his high-profile attacks on 'Beaconsfieldism'. One would therefore have expected his popular visibility to have been at its height during 1880 and 1885. Instead, we do not really see anything approaching domination until 1886. While the advent of the Home Rule crisis makes this high reading unsurprising in itself, the figure for 1892 is much more singular. This contest – featuring an 82 year-old Gladstone increasingly isolated from his by-now predominantly radical party – did not seem to be the muted swansong that historians such as Hamer, Dunbabin, Barker, Matthew, and Jenkins have suggested, but saw Gladstone at the peak of his dominance and visibility.

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[73] For 1895, the figures are: Gladstone: 20 (12 mentions from Conservative, 8 from Liberals); Harcourt: 39 (19,20); Rosebery: 35 (25, 10). For 1900, the figures are: Gladstone: 30 (28, 2), Harcourt: 20 (12, 8), Rosebery: 25 (20, 5).

[74] *Eastern Daily Press*, 20 Jun 1886.

The aggregate readings for these key political personalities are interesting, but only represent half of the data we need to be able to say anything with much certainty. The other half lies in qualification: in other words, why was Gladstone mentioned when he was? To gain this more nuanced understanding, we can again use an aggregate KWIC analysis for the 828 occasions Gladstone was referred to in the East Anglian corpus in these four elections. Figure 3.6 below shows the 3-4 most common contexts for each contest below:

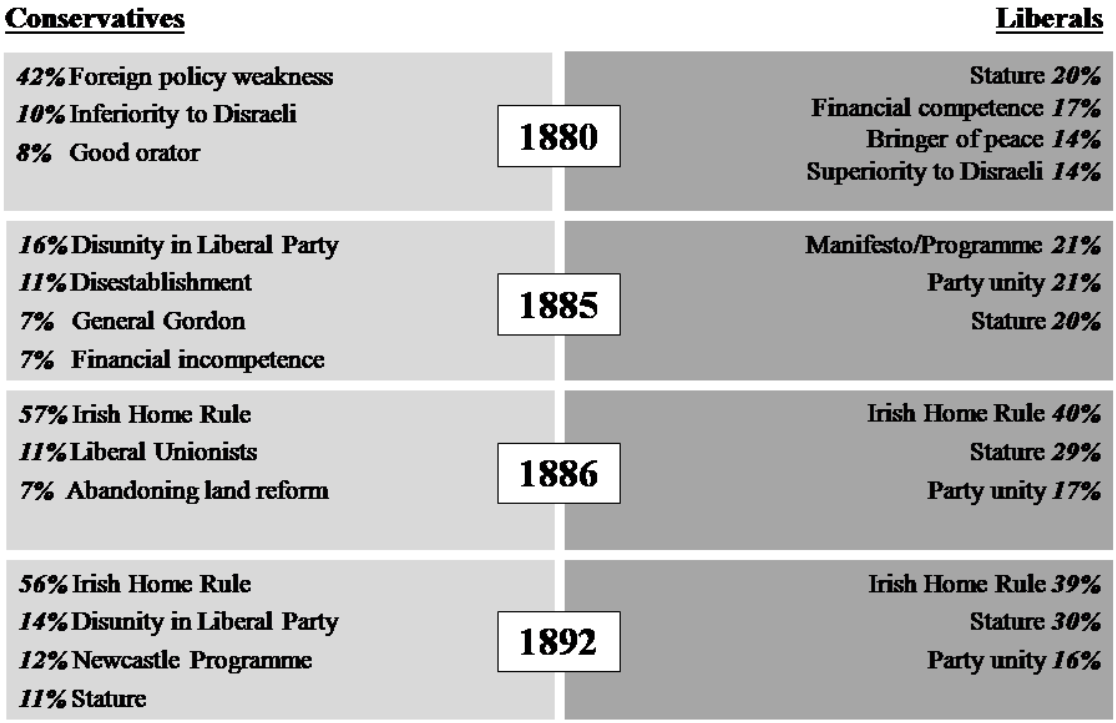

Figure 3.6: Gladstone 1880-1892: Common Contexts

Figure 3.6's readings for 1880 and 1885 are relatively scattered, but a clearer theme develops in 1886, where we see that the surge in Gladstone's visibility is largely on account of Irish Home Rule, which accounts for 57% and 40% of his mentions from Conservatives and Liberals respectively, and 56% and 39% in 1892. Conservatives were thus significantly more likely to link the Grand Old Man directly to Home Rule than were Liberals. Overall, the Gladstone of 1886 and 1892 seems to have become a more partisan, binary figure whose name had become firmly associated with the Irish question, and the unity (or disunity) of the Liberal Party: these account for no less than 59% of all instances in which he was mentioned by either party. In 1880 and 1885, the references to Gladstone are much more scattered: he was not (with the notable exception of foreign policy in 1880) strongly tied to a single particular issue or idea.

It could be argued, then, that Gladstone's domination of election speech in 1886 and 1892 may have been largely a hindrance for the Liberal Party if Home-Rule was, as suggested above, generally an albatross for speakers. This seems doubly convincing if we return to Figures 3.4 and 3.5 above, and consider that the vast majority of Gladstone's increase in 1886 and 1892 are actually from

Conservative speakers, who account for no less than 75% of the mentions, compared to just 59% in 1880 and 1885. The scores for Gladstone amongst Liberals (albeit with the notable exception of 1886 in East Anglia) are actually quite similar to what they were in 1880 and 1885. This suggests – much as we saw with Home Rule – that much of Gladstone's new dominance was negative; that he was more widely mentioned by Conservatives as a stick to beat the Liberals than by Liberals to rally supporters. Unionist attacks were intense and colourful. Birkbeck, for example, described Gladstone simply as a 'madman' and a Norfolk North-West speaker declared the Liberals 'paralysed by his jabber and eloquence' and as resembling 'a lot of cows in a field with their tails erect, looking at an express train.'[75] Indeed, Dalrymple went as far as to sarcastically acknowledge that the Liberals 'were so good as to say that the Conservative speeches consisted entirely of insults to Mr. Gladstone, without putting forward suggestions for any other policy'.[76]

This is not to suggest, however, that Gladstone was entirely a hindrance to his party. Celebrations of Gladstone's leadership and greatness (labelled 'stature' in Figure 3.6) were consistently made by Liberal speakers in each of the four general elections, and in fact increased in 1886 and 1892: running at 29% and 30% respectively. In 1886, Everett remarked that 'he could not help thinking that the Old Man saw with a clearer eye than the young men who sat around him... the last work of that long life would prove to have been the greatest work of all', Stern declared it the 'bounden duty of Englishmen to follow in the footsteps of Mr. Gladstone', and in 1892 Kemp spoke of 'an old man, a wonderful old man... still pushing those talents he so superabundantly possesses'.[77] The *East Anglian Daily Times* even described the 'great bulk' of the electors of Lowestoft in 1886 as 'worshipers of Mr. Gladstone...to them, the man is something more than a leader: he is the very embodiment of their political faith'.[78] Indeed, East Anglia's appetite for the Gladstonian was demonstrated even in 1892 by the 'disappointment' felt when Stern had the privilege of entertaining the Grand Old Man for dinner but 'neglected to enlighten the audience as to the number of dishes Mr. Gladstone ate, and the quantity of wines he supped.'[79] A second interesting indicator of Gladstone as a positive rhetorical resource for Liberals is shown by the below analysis of audience reactions noted in the East Anglian press when 'Gladstone' was mentioned. Figure 3.7 below illustrates the probability (as a per-word ratio) of a newspaper recording 'cheers', 'laughter', and 'applause' in the entire East Anglian Corpus from 1880-1892, compared to a special mini-corpus composed only of sentences where 'Gladstone' was mentioned:

[75] *Lowestoft Conservative Reporter*, 6 Jul 1886; *Lynn Advertiser*, 9 Jul 1886.

[76] *Ipswich Journal*, 29 Jun 1886.

[77] *East Anglian Daily Times*, 28, 23 Jun 1886; *Lynn News*, 16 Jun 1892.

[78] *East Anglian Daily Times*, 23 Jun 1886.

[79] *Bury and Norwich Post*, 28 Jun 1892.

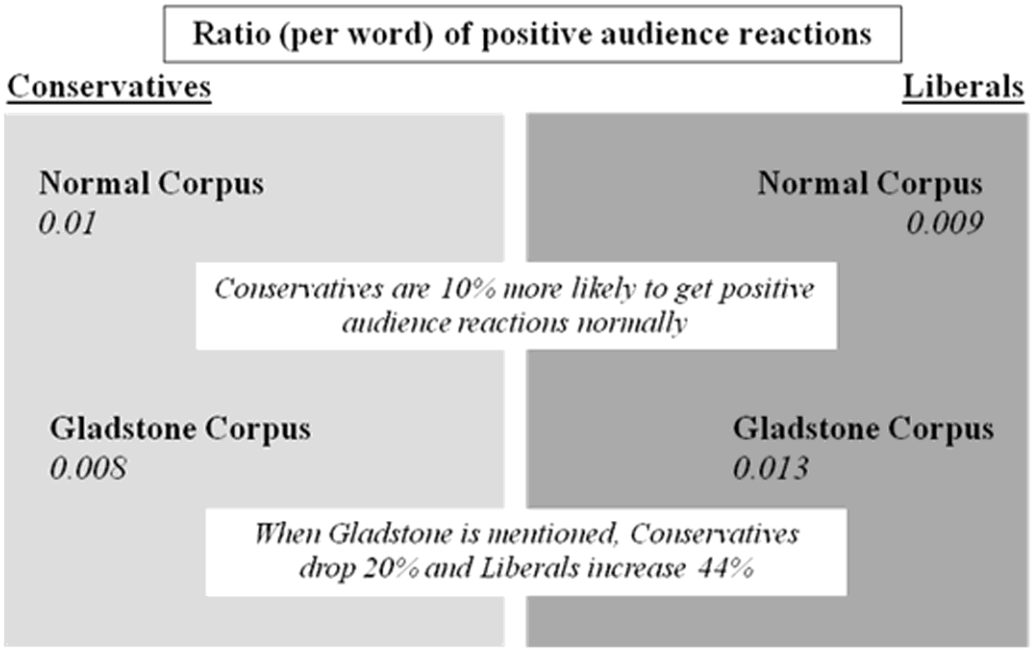

Figure 3.7: Gladstone's Reception by East Anglian Audiences, 1880-1892

Figure 3.7 suggests shows that in the main East Anglia corpus, Conservative speakers gained a positive audience reaction an average of 10 words out of every thousand, while the Liberals managed 9. In other words, Conservatives were 10% more likely to generate cheering, laugher, or applause under normal circumstances. However, in sentences where Gladstone was mentioned, the Liberal ratio increases by 44% to 13 words per thousand, and the Conservatives drop by 20% to 8 per thousand. This would seem to indicate that mentions of Gladstone enthused Liberal audiences and tended to depress Conservative ones. Of course, since there is no proven link between lively meetings and candidates winning elections, we cannot place much weight upon this analysis, but it does tend to reaffirm Gladstone's status as an asset to Liberal speakers. What is less clear, however, is once again the reciprocal question: whether he was in fact a bigger asset to Conservatives.

Overall, this chapter has offered three qualifications to the historiography of Home Rule and Gladstone. First, it has suggested that historians who see the Irish issue as central to the late Victorian period are mistaken, for it was relatively seldom mentioned outside of 1886 and 1892, where it dominated. Second, it argues that Home Rule – for all that it may have inspired Liberal thinkers and speakers – was more of a liability than an asset in the intense partisan arena of modern East Anglian electoral politics, mainly because it ceded so many simple, powerful appeals to their opponents. Indeed, it seems doubtful that many East Anglian electors necessarily cared a great deal about Home Rule: the *East Anglian Daily Times* interviewed some agricultural labourers on the subject in 1886, and reported that they were more interested in the nine shilling brewing licence, the Ipswich-Felixstowe Railway, and hoeing turnips.[80] In this environment, arguments about Irish history, Catholic

[80] *East Anglian Daily Times*, 24 Jun 1886.

equality, and the anatomy of a Dublin Parliament were liable to be comprehensively trumped by speakers who prioritised dismemberment of Empire and civil war. In this respect, Biagini, O'Day, and Heyck's analyses have exaggerated the popular appeal of Home Rule by understating the effectiveness with which opponents countered it. Thirdly and finally, this chapter has taken issue with the popular view that the 'Home Rule Gladstone' of 1892 was a diminished figure relative to the 'Midlothian Gladstone' of 1880 and 1885, and has also suggested that his positive contribution to the image of popular Liberalism may have been equalled, or possibly outweighed, by his corresponding contribution to Conservatism.

All three conclusions suggest strongly that historians should analyse political language holistically, and not take one party in isolation. It has perhaps been easy – because Home Rule was a Liberal policy, and because Gladstone the Liberal leader – to consider only half of the evidence, and to treat less seriously the critical corresponding impact on Conservative language. But speaking campaigns were debates, not dispatches, and orations were often more about what candidates *did not* believe in as what they did. Home Rule and Gladstone may well have stoked Liberal fires, but the flames perhaps burned higher and brighter on the other side. In this respect, the Liberal victory in 1892 was perhaps achieved in spite of Home Rule rather than because of it.

IV
Liberal Unionism

The majority of recent works have stressed the continuing separateness of Conservatives and Liberal Unionists, at least until 1895.[81] For Cawood, Liberal Unionism was 'a deliberate political position, not a mere halfway stop on a journey from Liberal to Conservative' while MacDonald is keen to stress the 'fluidity rather than rigid dogmatism' of party labels and the contested nature of terms such as 'Liberal' and 'Unionist'.[82] Ferris, meanwhile, suggests that the consistent number of candidatures even after 1895 reflected stability rather than decline, and Barbary argues that Liberal Unionism in Bury was 'a vibrant and independent movement'.[83] Indeed, even the older high political accounts of Fair, Fraser, Lubenow, and France suggest both parties behaved with considerable independence until at least 1892.[84] This chapter seeks to qualify this consensus by arguing – in the domain of political language – that Liberal Unionism *never* established a distinct party identity in East Anglia, mainly because it was seldom credited with one by Conservative and Liberal speakers who controlled the vast majority of oratorical production. It instead suggests that Liberal Unionists' main impact on election discourse was

[81] France, 'Salisbury and the Unionist Alliance', p.226; MacDonald, 'Locality, Tradition, and Language', pp.58-9; Barbary, 'From Platform to Polling Booth', pp.ii, 21.

[82] Cawood, 'The Lost Party', p.79, 264; MacDonald, 'Locality, Tradition, and Language', pp.58-9, 63.

[83] Ferris, 'Liberal Unionist Party', p.149; Barbary, 'From Platform to Polling Booth', p.ii.

[84] Fair, 'From Liberal to Conservative', p.294; Fraser, 'The Liberal Unionist Alliance', pp.59-62; France, 'Salisbury and the Unionist Alliance', pp.226-7; Lubenow, *Home Rule Crisis*, p.256.

an indirect boon to their allies. They allowed Conservatives to better exploit the rhetorical resource of political independence, and to better sustain an image of a national, rather than sectional party. The schism also affected Liberalism, allowing the radical element in the party to become dominant in East Anglia by 1892. This was reflected by widespread enthusiasm for the Newcastle Programme, which represented something of a return to the Unauthorized proposals which had achieved such notable success seven years previously.

A sensible place to begin is simply to use the East Anglian and national corpora to track party lemmas such as 'Unionist', 'Liberal', and 'Conservative' on an election by election basis from 1886 to December 1910. The full readings can be seen in Appendix 3.4, but the scores for 'Unionist', 'Liberal Unionist', 'Conservative' and 'Tory' are reproduced (For East Anglia and the national picture combined) as Figure 3.8 below:

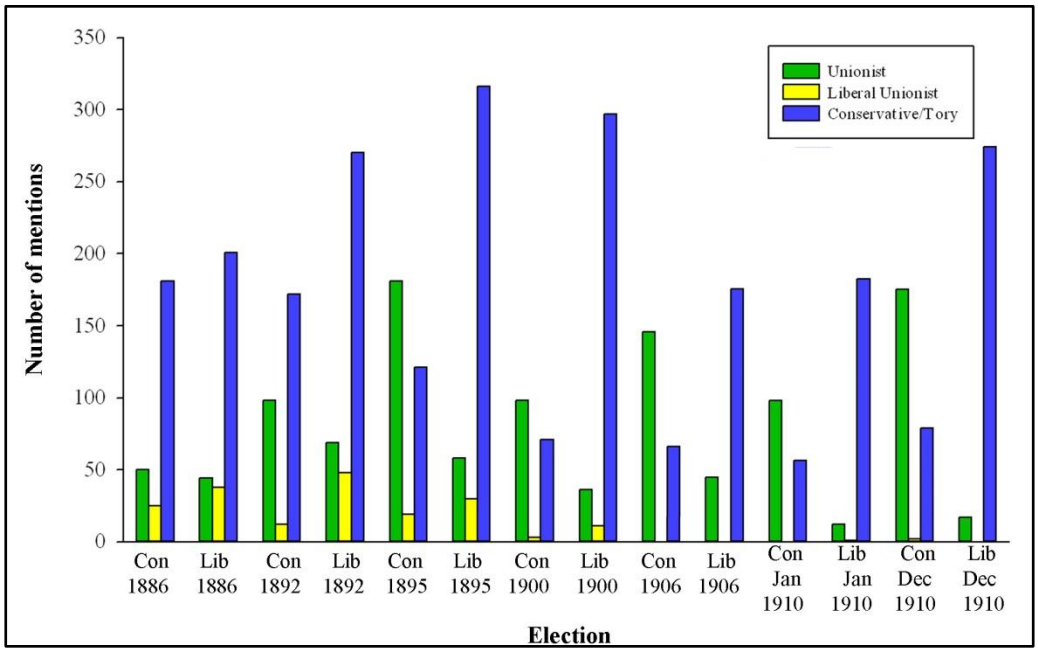

Figure 3.8: The Unionist Alliance, 1886-1910

See Appendix 3.4. Scores for East Anglia and the National Stage combined.

We turn first to the Conservatives. Figure 3.8 shows that the term 'Unionist' made limited initial impact (50 mentions) in 1886: speakers remained far more likely to self-identify as 'Conservative' or (occasionally) 'Tory' (181). This was only a slight decrease from the average for the previous two elections (197). By 1892, however, the two terms had markedly converged, and from 1895, 'Unionist' had permanently overtaken 'Conservative' as the preferred party label. The trend for 'Liberal Unionist' is the exact opposite: from 25 mentions in 1886, it declined throughout the 1890s, and had vanished altogether by the Edwardian period. Overall, Conservatives by the 1890s seemed content to describe the entire Unionist alliance by one generic term, and became progressively less inclined to differentiate between its constituent parts. Although the East Anglian and national pictures are broadly similar (see Appendix 3.4) it is also worth mentioning that frontbench speakers almost entirely abandoned the terms 'Conservative' and 'Tory' as early as 1900.

While Liberal Unionists were largely ignored on Conservative platforms after 1886, the party nevertheless retained a presence in East Anglia, and always contested at least one (and usually two or three) constituencies (see Appendix C). Indeed, the parties reached friendly terms remarkably quickly, prompting the *East Anglian Daily Times* to sarcastically ask: 'when will the statue of Jesse [Collings] be set up in the Conservative club?'[85] By 1892, the former Liberal candidate Hammond was moved to remark that 'the old Tory and old Whig are gone now – they have given way to the Conservative and the Liberal Unionist' while Fellowes insisted that 'instead of being divided into Tories and Liberals there should be only Unionists and Home Rulers'.[86] By 1895, a Norwich Liberal Unionist declared that he was 'greatly indebted to the great Conservative Party...I have the courage of my convictions to stand upon a Conservative platform'.[87] By 1900, a report from a Unionist meeting at Ipswich in the *East Anglian Daily Times* even placed "Liberal Unionist" in inverted commas and reported 'laughter' when it was used to differentiate between the alliance parties.[88] Overall, it seems – in East Anglia at least – that Liberal Unionism had a remarkably short shelf-life, and was rapidly assimilated into a generic language of Unionism.[89]

We can now turn to the Liberals, who also paid their former allies little attention, and still less respect. Figure 3.8 above shows that they used 'Unionist' much more sparingly, and continued to describe their opponents chiefly as 'Conservative' or (more often) 'Tory'. When they did mention 'Liberal Unionist' (which was around twice as often as their opponents did) it was overwhelmingly in the context of mockery or derision even in 1886. Thomson (Ipswich) could 'not distinguish between the Liberal seceders and our Tory opponents', while a Norwich speaker declared them 'unworthy of the name Liberal'.[90] At Eye, Stevenson labelled them 'Tories in disguise', Cozens-Hardy (North-Norfolk) as 'neither more nor less than Tory' and Oglive (Sudbury) as 'jellyfish, with no backbone'.[91] Indeed, MacDonald also notes similar hostility at Paisley, where the 'so-called liberal' was simply labelled as 'a Tory with a new name'.[92] Indeed, a KWIC analysis of all sentences containing 'Liberal Unionist' from East Anglian Liberals 1886-1900 (shown as Figure 3.9 below) suggests that these attitudes were widespread. No less than 80% of the references were proclamations that their former allies were now their enemies.

[85] *East Anglian Daily Times*, 24 Jun 1886.

[86] *Lynn Advertiser*, 9 and 6 Jul 1892.

[87] *Norfolk Chronicle*, 6 Jul 1895.

[88] *East Anglian Daily Times*, 26 Sept 1900.

[89] Lubenow, *Home Rule Crisis*, p.356, 288; O'Day, *Irish Home Rule*, pp.123-5; Parry, *Rise and Fall*, p.302.

[90] *East Anglian Daily Times*, 23 Jun 1886; *Eastern Daily Press*, 28 Jun 1886.

[91] *East Anglian Daily Times*, 24 Jun 1886; *Eastern Daily Press*, 29 May 1886; *East Anglian Daily Times*, 4 Jul 1895.

[92] MacDonald, 'Locality, Tradition, and Language', pp.58-59.

Portrayal of Liberal Unionists	Score (of 56 mentions)	%
Return to Liberal Party	2	4
Same as the Tories	45	80
Irish Disagreement	3	5
Dislike of Gladstone	1	2
Extinction/irrelevance	5	9

Figure 3.9: Portrayal of Liberal Unionists by Liberals in East Anglia, 1886-1900

The rough treatment of the East Anglian Liberal Unionists was not just confined to words, for their meetings were also the targets of disruption. Gurdon at Mid-Norfolk struggled to gain a hearing even before his own association when he announced his opposition to Home Rule, and at Eye, Collquon-Reade – who introduced himself as 'a lifelong Liberal' – was mocked as 'a Tory decoy-duck in Liberal Feathers' and similarly silenced.[93] It is worth noting that this disruption was not generally the work of roughs (who tended to be denounced publicly by both sides) but by named members of constituency Liberal clubs and associations. Overall, Liberal language was almost uniformly hostile to their former allies even in 1886, and *The East Anglian Daily Times* warned that their willingness to immediately cry traitor risked alienating forever men who were still their natural supporters.[94]

The attacks also lacked focus. As Figure 3.9 shows, only a minority were confined to specific areas (such as Ireland) where there were accepted disagreements, and most simply collapsed to binary differentiations between political friends and political foes. This perhaps reflects the necessary partisanship of the language of the platform, where speeches were inevitably partly (and often mostly) attacks on the opposing party. Liberals facing Liberal Unionist opponents did not suddenly adopt a more polite, consensual style of campaigning, and Liberal Unionists seldom got the opportunity to focus fire on Conservatives even if they had wanted to. When their speakers used the platform to attack, it was necessarily to attack Liberals who they were trying to defeat (aided substantially by Conservative votes). Overall, it was difficult for Liberal Unionists to sustain a meaningful party identity when neither of the larger parties was mindful to credit them with one, and when their own opportunities to forge one from the platform were limited, and constrained by the need to keep local Conservatives on side. As Stevenson argued in 1895 'The Liberal Unionist game had been very much played out. They were now called upon to choose between one party on the opposite side and the party which they themselves supported'.[95] In other words, the bi-polar nature of electoral discourse made it difficult for more than two national parties to viably exist, especially given the diminishment of the Irish issue from 1895. In all probability, only a small number of electors were ever really understood what 'Liberal Unionist identity' really meant. Indeed, the *Pall Mall Gazette* thought the party so esoteric and removed from the political mainstream by the mid-1890s that it ran the occasional

[93] *East Anglian Daily Times*, 28 Jun 1886; *Eastern Daily Press*, 20 Jun 1886.

[94] *East Anglian Daily Times*, 1 Jul 1886.

[95] *Suffolk Chronicle*, 6 Jul 1895.

humorous column titled 'In Liberal Unionist Land'. [96] Therefore, while Cawood and Barbary are right to stress that Liberal Unionists regarded themselves as distinct, and built up a number of important and enduring local power bases, they do not sufficiently address the idea that the other political parties – who controlled the vast majority of platforms – were not so kind.

We can now turn to the impact of Liberal Unionism on the main parties, starting with the Conservatives. As we have already seen in Figure 3.8, 'Unionist' became the more popular term of self-identification from 1895 in East Anglia, and nationally. One might have expected the term to decline once the Irish issue receded but, even in 1900 (when Ireland was very seldom mentioned) it remained at the fore. This fact in itself is quite remarkable. Conservative speakers showed little resistance to substituting their traditional party label for this new term, even when Home Rule was off the agenda, and when Liberal Unionism had arguably ceased to be a significant parliamentary or extra-parliamentary force. The fact that speakers continued to use the term perhaps reflects the extent to which the party genuinely regarded itself to be a different creature than it had been before the Liberal split.

A natural question arising from this is to what extent Conservatives used their new Unionist skin to stress their supposedly progressive credentials, as is widely claimed by historians.[97] The previous chapter argued that there is clear evidence that this process actually began in 1885 in East Anglia, with widespread allusions to 'progressive Conservatism' and a concerted attempt to attract whigs and moderates who might have taken exception to Chamberlain's Unauthorized Programme.[98] Their appeal was spearheaded by a new emphasis on reform (the frequency of the lemma itself tripled in East Anglia and quadrupled on the national stage between 1880 and 1885). The corpus does not suggest that usage of this language advanced in 1886 on account of the alliance, as evidenced by Appendix 3.5. References to 'reform', 'working class', 'working men' and poor people/poverty had all fallen back considerably from 1885, before returning to similar levels in the remaining three Victorian elections. Secondly, mentions of specific Liberal Unionists such as Bright and Hartington, while generally higher than for 1885 (see Figures 3.4 and 3.5) were overwhelmingly in relation to the Irish issue, and were on no occasion used to claim superior progressive credentials. Overall, this enquiry supports the view of Roberts, Windscheffel, and France who see 1885 as the main turning point in the adaption of Conservatism to mass politics.[99]

The alliance was perhaps important in another respect; it allowed Conservative speakers to claim independence as a rhetorical resource. Traditionally mocked for their unthinking discipline and obedience, the presence of Liberal Unionists made it much more difficult for their opponents to claim

[96] See for example *Pall Mall Gazette*, 15 Jun 1895.

[97] Blewett, *Peers*, p.15; Howarth, 'Liberal Revival', p.98; Shannon, 'The Ulster Liberal Unionists', p.347, 363; Fraser, 'The Liberal Unionist Alliance', p.62; Fair, 'From Liberal to Conservative', p.311; Marsh, *Popular Government*, p.241.

[98] See Chapter Two above, pp.83-85.

[99] Windscheffel, *Popular Conservatism*, p.56; Roberts, 'Villa-Torysim', p.227; France, 'Salisbury and the Unionist Alliance', p.223.

that they were, in the words of Gurdon in 1880, men whose 'first principle is that he is to put his own opinion in his pocket and to follow blindly the lead of the party whip'.[100] Appendix 3.4 shows that in 1886, the Conservatives achieved the highest scores for the lemma 'independence' in the whole post-reform period on both a local and national level (amongst either party). However, the term was invariably employed to stress the merits of independent representatives rather than to differentiate Conservatives from Liberal Unionists. Greene (Stowmarket) claimed that 'he liked independence in the electors, as he would be independent himself...he would never go to Parliament as a delegate' while Gibson-Bowles declared himself 'an independent Conservative...although I am more or less a party man, above all I am an Englishman'.[101] East Anglia's Liberal Unionists also struck a similar chord, and emphasised their independence still further.[102] Gurdon, who had berated Conservatives for their want of independence in 1880, turned his fire on his own Mid-Norfolk party in 1886, criticising them for 'think[ing] a member of parliament was not to have any opinions...but simply to act as a machine to register the decrees of the minister and of the party whips. Is it wise to even have a man at all? Would it not be better to have a machine which could be wound up?'[103]

The underlying theme which arguably united these emphases on independence, especially in 1886, was an appeal to a 'national good' that ran higher than selfish party interests. Quilter, the Liberal Unionist MP for Sudbury, praised the 'very great allowances they [the Conservatives] have made in order to join us, as we have made some sacrifices to join them...we have proved that it is possible for Englishmen to lay aside even old party prejudices and views...for the benefit of their common country.[104] This, as Windscheffel, Fair, Jay, and Lawrence have recognised, also served to contrast Unionists with their supposedly narrow, sectarian, faddist-dominated opponents whose chief political characteristic was a willingness to follow Gladstone.[105] It also perhaps highlighted the Liberals' sudden departure from their traditional appeal founded on a cross-class ideology of national unity.[106] Indeed, a taxonomy of nation and Empire (see Appendix 3.2) seems to bear this out. Figure 3.10 below displays this taxonomy as a series of pie-charts showing the East Anglian Conservative aggregate shares for 'Kingdom', 'Britain', 'Nation', 'England', 'Union', and 'Empire/Imperial' relative to the Liberals for each election after 1885:

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[100] *Norwich Mercury*, 3 Apr 1880.

[101] *Ipswich Journal*, 19 Jun 1886; *Lynn Advertiser*, 2 Jul 1892.

[102] See for example Quilter (Sudbury), *Suffolk Chronicle*, 25 Jun 1886; Hammond, (South-West Norfolk); *Lynn Advertiser*, 9 Jul 1892, and Gurdon (Mid Norfolk), *Eastern Daily Press*, 20 Jun 1886.

[103] *Eastern Daily Press*, 20 Jun 1886.

[104] *East Anglian Daily Times*, 14 Jul 1886.

[105] Windscheffel, *Popular Conservatism*, pp. 55, 299-300, 314; Fair, 'From Liberal to Conservative', p.315; Jay, *Joseph Chamberlain*, pp. 179-80; Lawrence, *Speaking for the People*, p.194. For more on Liberal faddism, see Chapter Four, pp.153-160.

[106] Parry, *Rise and Fall*, pp.274-306.

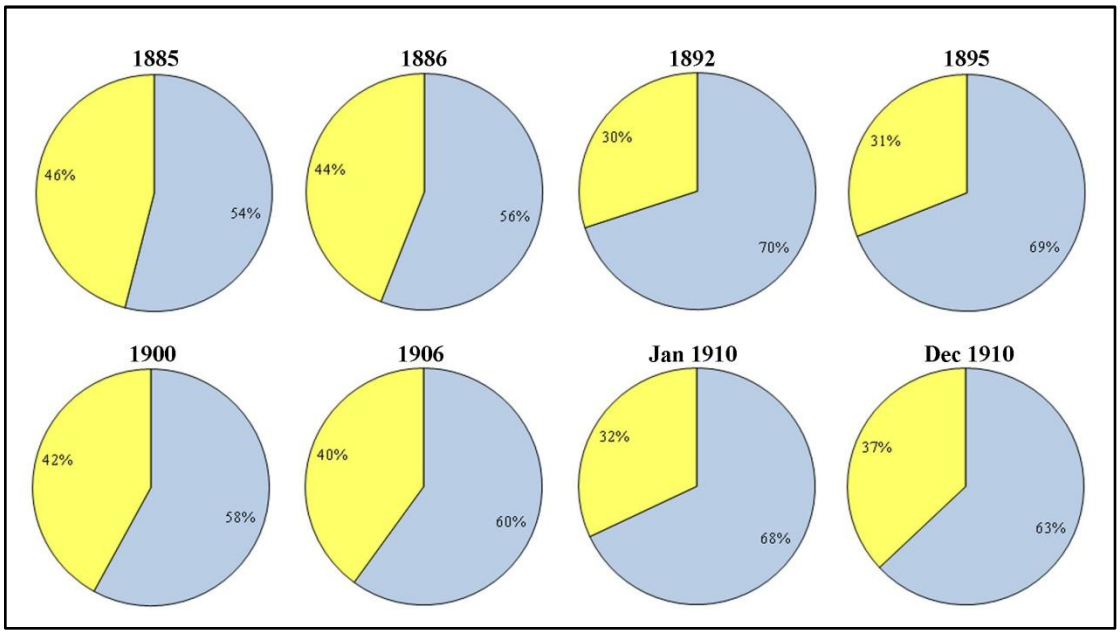

Figure 3.10: Nation and Empire in East Anglia, 1885-1910: Proportions of Vocabulary

See Appendix 3.2.

Figure 3.10 shows that East Anglian Conservatives generally led their opponents on these five keywords throughout the period. They enjoy modest advantages in 1885 and 1886, and these increase notably in 1892 and 1895. The lead then falls back slightly in 1900, before climbing again throughout the Edwardian period. Although the 1886 lead looks modest, it disguises a quite sizeable underlying shift from 1885, where (as Appendix 3.2 shows) the Conservative aggregate score for all six keywords more than doubled. By the 1890s, East Anglian Unionist speakers were more than twice as likely to employ the vocabulary of nation and Empire as Liberals. The advent of 'Unionism' and the term's adoption as a staple of political vocabulary in these two contests (as shown by Figure 3.8) may not have directly caused this, but it seems unlikely to be a coincidence.

* * *

Finally, we can turn to the effect of the Liberal Unionist secession on the language of Liberalism. Many historians have made the intuitive argument that the removal of the moderate element radicalised the party in the long run.[107] Despite this, the Newcastle Programme is generally not

[107] See for example France, 'Salisbury and the Unionist Alliance', p.237; Lubenow, *Home Rule Crisis*, p.264; Heyck, 'Home Rule', p.264.

credited as having generated much enthusiasm in the constituencies.[108] To gauge the programme's impact in East Anglia, we can first use the corpus to assess its visibility in the 1892 campaign. Figure 3.11 below investigates the Newcastle proposals individually, assessing whether each was more widely mentioned in 1892 than it had been in the previous two elections:

Issue	CON 1892	LIB 1892	CON 1885-86	LIB 1885-86
Programme (General)	30	27	5	17
One-Man-One-Vote	14	54	0	0
House of Lords	3	21	7	12
Welsh Disestablishment	0	4	1	3
Employers' Liability	1	3	1	2
Local Veto	12	8	2	4
District/Parish Councils	59	80	12	32
TOTAL	**119**	**197**	**28**	**70**

Figure 3.11: The Newcastle Programme in East Anglia in 1892

Figure 3.11 shows that mentions of 'Programme' and all the individual Newcastle proposals increased (on average) threefold amongst Liberals and fourfold amongst Conservatives in 1892. One-man-one-vote was particularly widely-cited by Liberals, as were the proposed reforms to county government. The programme thus seems to have succeeded in raising the profile of some of the NLF's proposals. Kemp (King's Lynn) was inspired enough to remark that 'it is a change, it is an alteration, it may be it is a revolution' and Bedford at Norwich declared that 'the tide of public opinion has rolled on and the Liberal Federation have incorporated in their programme the desires of the people, and all the Liberal candidates now before the constituencies have adopted that programme in its entirety'.[109] Meanwhile, the absence of any rival Conservative programme was criticised. Samuel Hoare's address was said to be a 'colourless document...which will enable the gentleman to escape by a side door or a back door' and Soames described Tory promises as 'skeletons....because they have no life in them'.[110] For their part, the Conservatives took the programme seriously. It was described by various speakers as 'a sham', 'rotten...rickety and jerry-built', and 'one of the most ingenious pieces of fraud ever placed before the people'.[111] Lord Elcho urged electors not to 'run after the rainbow [of] unlimited promises to

[108] Hamer, *Liberal Politics*, pp.173-4; Barker, *Gladstone and Radicalism*, p.205; O'Day, *Irish Home Rule*, p.145; Heyck, 'Home Rule', p.281; Jenkins, *Gladstone*, p.581; Dunbabin, 'Electoral Reforms', p.122; Fraser, 'The Liberal Unionist Alliance', p.53; Lawrence, *Speaking for the People*, pp.194-5; Ostrogorski, *Organisation of Political Parties*, vol. 1, pp.316-7.

[109] *Lynn Advertiser*, 16 Apr 1892; *Eastern Evening News*, 21 Jun 1892.

[110] *Eastern Evening News*, 24 Jun 1892; *Suffolk Chronicle*, 9 Jul 1892. See also Liberal meeting at Ipswich, *Star of the East*, 17 Jun 1892.

[111] *Ipswich Journal*, 2 Jul 1892; *East Anglian Daily Times*, 30, 20 Jun 1892.

any number of voters, faddists, and crotchetiers, upon any subject they like, providing there they can gain six or seven votes by it'.[112]

Despite the excitement generated by the Newcastle Programme in East Anglia, it lacked the purchase that Chamberlain's version had enjoyed seven years previously. The Unauthorized Programme had lifted Land Reform, Disestablishment, and Free Education from obscurity in 1880 to pole positions in 1885. Even the NLF could not claim their manifesto had achieved this kind of success. But despite this, it seems a little misleading to dismiss the Newcastle Programme as an 'incoherent omnibus' (Hamer), a 'new set of clothes...to cloak the Irish skeleton' (Barker), or a 'capacious ragbag' (Jenkins).[113] This is not to dispute that it lacked intellectual coherency, and may have been the product of primarily negative and defensive political calculations, but it does not necessarily follow that this made it unpopular with the wider party, or the electorate. Indeed, two of its proposals (House of Lords reform and Local Veto) failed to take fire in 1892, but went on to become important in 1895. This meant that – along with One-man-one-vote and District Councils – that the Newcastle proposals were probably still the most important agenda-setting influence in East Anglian electoral politics in the 1890s. Indeed, the programme also re-emerged in 1895, and was more wholeheartedly adopted by the Liberals.[114] Finally, it may have been no coincidence (as Figure 3.12 below shows) that the language of radicalism featured most prominently in East Anglia in 1885, 1892, and 1895: the three Victorian elections most influenced by programme politics.

We turn finally to the general language of radicalism in 1892. The tone of East Anglian Liberal appeals was striking, featuring graphic descriptions of the material plight of the poor, and sharp attacks on the aristocracy and their privileged Unionist opponents. The former were variously depicted as 'a bad lot of roughs from Normandy...men who toil not, neither do they spin' who had 'filched seven million acres from the people' and reduced the labouring poor to 'a bed of straw, a crust of bread, and rags'.[115] The latter were described as those who 'want to keep the working man down', 'defeat the hopes of the people' and whose only policy was 'blind opposition to progress'.[116] So demonised were the enemy that an Ipswich Liberal proposed a 'motto for the working man' which ran simply: 'to whatever the Tories say 'no' you say 'yes''.[117] The election itself was often depicted as little short of a fight between good against evil. Goddard characterised it as 'the battle of the masses against the classes... the vested interests against the public good', while Soames declared that the first principle of Liberalism was 'the abolition of all privileges that are enjoyed by rank and wealth'.[118] Plainest of all

[112] *East Anglian Daily Times*, 23 Jun 1886.

[113] Hamer, *Liberal Politics*, p.174; Barker, *Gladstone and Radicalism*, p.56; Jenkins, *Gladstone*, p.581.

[114] See pp.136-7 below, and Figure 4.3.

[115] *Lynn Advertiser*, 16 Apr 1892; *Suffolk Chronicle*, 2 Jul 1892; *Star of the East*, 30 Jun 1892.

[116] *Eastern Evening News*, 2 Jul 1892; *East Anglian Daily Times*, 28 Jun 1886.

[117] *Eastern Daily Press*, Jun 28 1886.

[118] *Star of the East*, 8 Jul 1892; *Suffolk Chronicle*, 20 Jun 1892.

was Kemp, who proclaimed that the working man had 'been crushed by the iron heel of tyranny...those who have been kicked think it is time they were kicked no more'.[119]

To quantify this language, and place the 1892 election in context, we can once again employ the taxonomy of radicalism used in the previous chapter ('programme', 'radical', 'reform', 'class', 'poor'/'poverty'). The aggregate scores (which can be seen in full in Appendix 3.5) are reproduced, for each election in the period, as Figure 3.12 below:

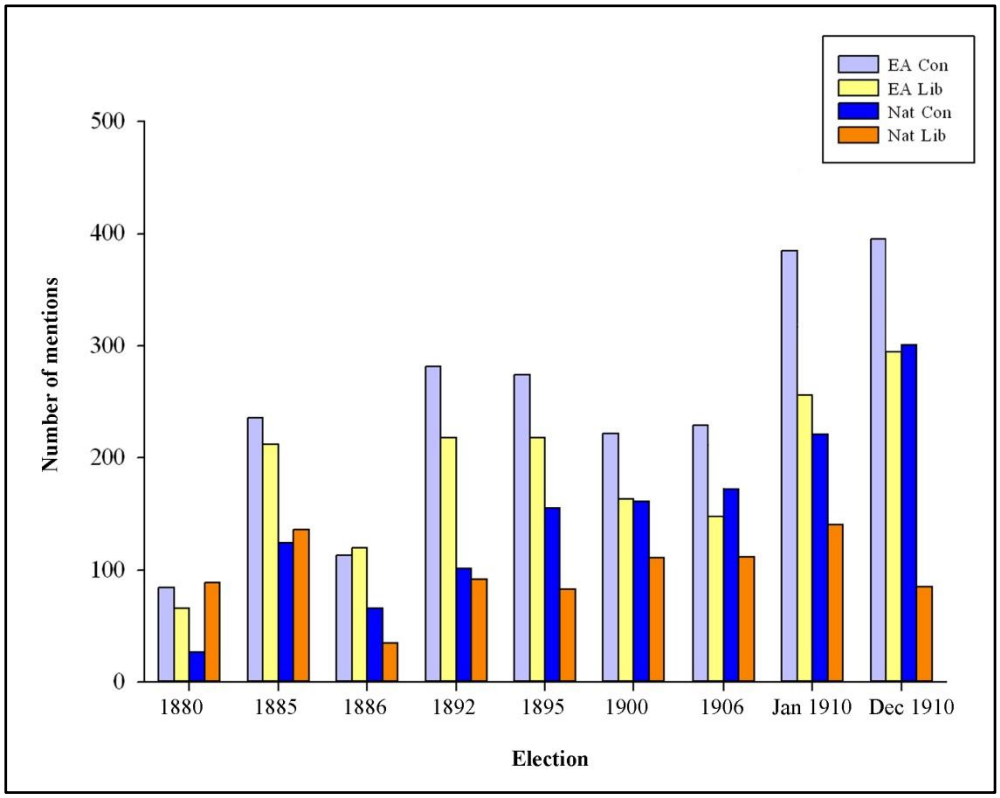

Figure 3.12: Radicalism, 1880-1910

See Appendix 3.5.

Figure 3.12 clearly suggests that the new dominance radicalism had achieved in 1885 was reversed in 1886, both in East Anglia and on the national stage. This suggests that Home Rule was not a natural conduit for radical vocabulary in the way the Unauthorized Programme had been. Indeed, it would seem from these figures that the radicalisation of Liberalism was initially stalled by the schism rather than accelerated as Heyck, Hamer, Barker, and Lubenow suggest. This, after all, was a key reason for Chamberlain and Collings' anger at the Irish proposal: that it effectively aborted the new 1885 Parliament which was full of their supporters.[120] The rise of radical language again in 1892 (and its permanent sustenance thereafter) did not so much represent the advent of a newly radicalised East Anglian Liberal Party, but a return to the language of 1885. Had Gladstone not proposed Home Rule, it seems equally possible – as Lynch, Hammond, Blewett have suggested – that many whigs and

[119] *Lynn Advertiser*, 16 Apr 1892.

[120] Historians have estimated the number of Chamberlainite MPs after 1885 at around 160-180: over half the Parliamentary party. See Barker, *Gladstone and Radicalism*, p.24; M. Pugh, *The Making of Modern British Politics* (Oxford, 1985), p.32.

moderates would have left the party anyway, and the Liberals would have fought the proceeding general election on a radical platform similar to the one they returned to in 1892.[121] Indeed, the permanent high visibility of radical language in post-reform East Anglia outside of 1886 strongly suggests that this contest was an aberration, and possibly an unwanted period of disruption to the region's political body-clock. In that respect, it could be argued that 1885 was the real turning-point, and the 1886 schism represented more of a brake than an accelerator to the radicalisation of the party.

This section has reassessed the impact of Liberal Unionism in two ways. First, it has contended that existing studies of Liberal Unionism tend to exaggerate the party's importance. In the broader discourse of popular politics, Liberal Unionists struggled to exert influence beyond the platforms they directly controlled, and were quickly presented by both Liberals and Conservatives as part and parcel of an overall Unionist alliance. Second, it has argued that their influence was mostly indirect; they allowed Conservatives to make independence an important rhetorical resource, and their absence made it easier for radicals to regain the East Anglian Liberal platform they had lost in 1886. However, this chapter has also sought to qualify the widely-held view that the formation of the Unionist alliance in itself gave birth to a newly progressive Conservatism or a newly radicalised Liberalism. Both changes had become apparent in 1885, and the lines of battle drawn up in 1892 arguably represented a return to the default linguistic environment of post-reform East Anglian electoral politics.

V

Conclusion

This chapter has reassessed the impact of Home Rule and Liberal Unionism on the language of popular politics. It has contended that the Irish issue was not a constant centrepiece of the Victorian platform, but a storm which engulfed two general elections, and that the impact of Liberal Unionism was limited. It has also sought, on the one hand, to challenge the view that Home Rule, and the leadership of Gladstone, were positive rhetorical resources for the Liberals. On the other, it has questioned historians' depiction of the Newcastle Programme as a failure. Finally, it has reconsidered the extent to which the advent of the Unionist Alliance in 1886 was the real turning point in the post-reform battle of image and ideas, and has instead suggested that the new trends of progressive Conservatism and radical Liberalism were already strongly in evidence in East Anglia in 1885.

In painting this picture of electoral politics in these years, this chapter has appeared to disagree with more accounts than it has corroborated. This would be a slight misrepresentation. Biagini is surely correct when he points to the widespread admiration for Home Rule in the Liberal Party, as are Goodlad and Meisel's readings of Gladstone as an inspirational leader to his party. Similarly, Cawood, MacDonald, Barbary, and Ferris are right to stress the degree to which Liberal Unionists regarded

[121] Lynch, *Liberal Party*, pp.46-50; Blewett, *Peers*, p.15; Hammond, *Gladstone and the Irish Nation*, pp.473-4.

themselves as a distinct political force, and retained an independent identity in a number of important localities. This chapter has questioned these interpretations mainly because it has considered the portrayal of issues, ideas, and personalities by both parties in tandem through an analysis of debate and partisan exchange. This does not so much directly oppose historians who have analysed one side of political discourse alone, but can nevertheless inspire a different holistic reading. However, it could equally be argued that historians have been reluctant to acknowledge the problems inherent in detaching one view of politics – be it of Liberalism, Liberal Unionism, or Conservatism – and studying it largely in isolation. Political language, as this chapter has demonstrated, was an interconnected, overlapping, and partisan discourse where the impact of an issue, idea, or personality on one party should be set against its corresponding impact on the other.

CHAPTER 4

The Impact of Imperialism

The General Elections of 1895 and 1900

I

Electoral Politics 1895-1900- An Overview

In June 1895, Lord Rosebery was forced to resign after losing a relatively minor Commons vote over the supply of cordite to the army, and Lord Salisbury, on taking over, immediately dissolved Parliament for a general election. The outgoing Liberal ministry had passed few measures of real significance with the exception of the Parish Councils Act in 1894, and the introduction of death duties in the same year. Its leaders had been driven into confusion and division following Gladstone's retirement in 1894, and Rosebery had little to show the electorate other than to represent the Newcastle Programme and blame the House of Lords for the Liberals' failure to enact it.[1] The party was perhaps at its Victorian nadir, and left 132 seats uncontested. The alliance between the Conservatives and Liberal Unionists had become closer, and few seriously doubted the realignment was now permanent, and it was not a surprise that they gained 98 seats and won a crushing majority of 152.[2]

East Anglia closely followed the national picture. The swing to Unionism from the previous election was just 1%, but this yielded impressive gains. The retirement of J.J. Colman at Norwich allowed the local brewer Harry Bullard (who had served a seven-year ban following his unseating on a petition in 1885) to return as the city's junior member, and J.C.R. Colomb gained Yarmouth. The Liberals did wrest a seat back at Ipswich, but the successful candidate, Daniel Ford Goddard, was now their only East Anglian borough member. In the counties, the picture was unchanged in Norfolk, with the Liberals holding four out of six constituencies (despite close calls in the Mid, East, and Northern divisions), but in Suffolk, they lost Stowmarket and Woodbridge to Ian Malcolm and Captain E.J. Pretyman respectively. They also left two difficult seats (Bury St. Edmunds and Sudbury) uncontested; just the second time they had failed to put up a candidate for an East Anglian division since 1880. Like in 1892, there was no dominant single issue in the speaking campaign. The corpus suggests, as we shall see, that House of Lords, Local Veto, and social reform were emphasised most widely, but the visibility of Home Rule declined markedly. *The Bury and Norwich Post* triumphantly

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[1] P. Marsh, *The Discipline of Popular Government: Lord Salisbury's Domestic Statecraft 1881-1902* (Hassocks, 1978), pp.245-46; R. Shannon, *The Age of Salisbury, 1881-1902: Unionism and Empire* Michigan, 1996), pp.406-21; R. Rhodes-James, *Rosebery* (1963), p.384; N. Blewett, *The Peers, the Parties and the People: the General Elections of 1910* (Bristol, 1972), p.21.

[2] J. Fair, 'From Liberal to Conservative: the flight of the Liberal Unionists after 1886', *Victorian Studies*, 29 (1986), pp.299-300.

declared that 'The opposition bench...will return to Parliament with very much the feeling of schoolboys after a sound whipping'.[3]

Five years later, in October 1900, Salisbury chose to dissolve Parliament for the so-called 'khaki' election. In South Africa, British troops appeared to be almost victorious in their battle against President Kruger and the Boers for the annexation of the Orange Free State and the Transvaal (although as it transpired, the war dragged on until 1902). The content of election campaign has been the subject of much debate, but most historians, as we shall see, now agree that this was indeed a khaki election dominated by the issue of the war. Like in 1895, the Liberal frontbench was divided, and Campbell-Bannerman's position as leader was precarious: he occupied a small (and dwindling) centre ground in the party, and was encircled by the emerging Liberal Imperialists led by Lord Rosebery on the right, and the radicals and 'Pro-Boers' led by Harcourt, Labouchere, and others, on the left.[4] The frontbench was able to provide little in the way of leadership to the grassroots: Morley wrote that he did not 'very well know what to say to our poor sheep wandering around in the wilderness'.[5] Few leading Liberals expressed a strong desire to take office, and sought mainly to strengthen the opposition benches.[6] They left a record 163 constituencies uncontested and managed to gain only a handful of seats nationwide. The result, despite some regional variations, was very similar to 1895: a Unionist majority of 134.

In East Anglia, the Liberal performed significantly better than they did nationally. In the seats they contested, they managed to win a majority (50.8%) of votes. In the counties, Suffolk was unchanged, but the Liberals advanced in Norfolk, increasing their share in all six constituencies and holding the Southern division which had been gained by A.W. Soames in a by-election in 1898. The difference between the two East Anglian counties was striking: the Unionists maintained control of four of the five Suffolk divisions, but just one out of six in Norfolk. In the boroughs, however, the Unionist domination continued, with Goddard remaining the only Liberal member in the region. This was partly a reflection of the Liberals' limited electoral ambition: they chose not to contest either Yarmouth or Norwich, despite having won both as recently as 1892. In the speaking campaign, as we shall see, the war was almost as dominant an election issue as Ireland had been in 1886, and social reform was effectively crowded out. The Liberal *Eastern Daily Press* complained that 'The war is a striking incident in the history of the last five years; but it is not the only incident: great questions have arisen as to which the country is bound to hold and to express strong opinions'.[7]

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[3] *Bury and Norwich Post*, 6 Aug 1895.

[4] D. Hamer, *Liberal Politics in the age of Gladstone and Rosebery: a Study in Leadership and Policy* (Oxford, 1972), pp.209-211 and *John Morley: Liberal Intellectual in Politics* (Oxford, 1968), p.330; L. McKinstry, *Rosebery: Statesman in Turmoil* (London, 2005), ch.14; A. Sykes, *The Rise and Fall of British Liberalism*, 1776-1988 (1997), p.137.

[5] Hamer, *John Morley*, p.328.

[6] J. Spender, *The Life of the Right Hon. Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, H.C.G* (London, 1923), vol.1, p.291.

[7] *Eastern Daily Press*, 29 Sept 1900.

II

Introduction

The historiography of these two elections is dominated by the Conservative Party, the 'khaki' struggle of 1900, and the issue of Imperialism.[8] The Liberal Party, the 1895 election, and other contemporary issues (such as social reform, the House of Lords, and Old Age Pensions) have attracted comparatively scant attention.[9] Although the recent work of Paul Readman – particularly his analyses of election addresses – has rekindled interest in the two campaigns, historians have continued to be fascinated by Imperialism, patriotism, and the Conservative Party. The (generally older) accounts of Liberalism in these elections largely revolve around the increasing influence of Nonconformist moralistic faddism, and the party's consequent preoccupation with fringe issues such as temperance reform and Welsh Disestablishment.[10]

Despite the historiography's lopsided coverage, many of the newer accounts focus on language. This is helpful, because it naturally invites a sterner test of this dissertation's potential to break new ground in an area which has already been heavily-mined by qualitative studies. In addition, we are also well-placed to compare this dissertation's corpus-driven methodology to the election address analyses of Paul Readman, A.K. Russell, and Neal Blewett, which represent the only quantitative studies of Victorian and Edwardian electoral language attempted thus far.[11] With this in mind, the first question this chapter will ask is simply whether historians' current conception of the contents of the 1895 and 1900 speaking campaigns is accurate. As well as representing an interesting

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[8] Studies which focus exclusively, or predominantly, on the 1900 election include: P. Readman, 'The Conservative Party, Patriotism, and British Politics: the case of the General Election of 1900', *Journal of British Studies* (2001); R. Price, *An Imperial War and the British Working Class* (Bristol, 1972); I. Sharpe, 'Empire, Patriotism and the Working-Class Electorate: The 1900 General Election in the Battersea Constituency', *Parliamentary History* (2009); P. Nicholls, *Khaki and the Confessional: a Study of a Religious Issue at the 1900 General Election in England* (Melbourne, 2000); J. Schneer, *London 1900: the Imperial Metropolis* (Yale, 2001), pp.229-60.

[9] Studies which analyse the buildup to the election of 1895 and/or the campaign itself include: P. Readman 'The 1895 general election and political change in late Victorian Britain', *Historical Journal*, (1999); P. Lynch, *The Liberal Party in rural England 1885-1910: Radicalism and Community* (Oxford, 2003), ch.4; Hamer, *Liberal Politics*; P. Cassidy, 'Temperance and the 1895 General Election in the Constituency of Derby', *Midland History* (2008); A. Windscheffel, *Popular Conservatism in Imperial London, 1868-1906* (Woodbridge, 2007), ch.7.

[10] See esp. Hamer, *Liberal Politics*; Rhodes-James, *Rosebery*; E. Feuchtwanger, *Democracy and Empire: Britain, 1865-1914* (London, 1985); H Matthew, *The Liberal Imperialists: The Ideas and Politics of a Post-Gladstonian Élite* (Oxford, 1973). The newer J. Lawrence, *Speaking for the People: Party, Language, and Popular Politics in England, 1867-1914* (Cambridge, 1998), pp.194-217 and Sykes, *Rise and Fall*, pp.134-43 have also emphasised similar themes in their discussion of Liberalism in the 1890s.

[11] Paul Readman, A.K. Russell, and Neal Blewett have attempted to manually quantify the language of election addresses in the elections of 1895, 1900, 1906, and January and December 1910. They counted references to issues, and how they were prioritized in hundreds of addresses. See A. Russell, *Liberal Landslide: the General Election of 1906* (Newton Abbot, 1973), pp.64-94; Blewett, *Peers*, pp.209-22; Readman, 'The 1895 general election', p.471, 475 and 'The General Election of 1900', pp.114-16.

test of competing methodologies, this is necessary because there have been quite fundamental disagreements over the relative prominence of key issues, especially in the 1900 campaign. Richard Price, in his *An Imperial War and the British Working Class* argues that the 'khaki' label is a misnomer, and in most constituencies (those without a pro-Boer Liberal candidate and/or with a high concentration of working-class voters) the war was subordinate to social reform as an election issue.[12] Although widely questioned by historians such as Readman, Windscheffel, and Sharpe, the influence of Price's thesis has been evident in numerous works.[13] Indeed, Brodie and Porter have recently offered explicit support by arguing that Imperialism generated little enthusiasm amongst voters, and was seldom mentioned in working-class constituencies.[14] The first part of this chapter will therefore use the corpus to examine the speaking campaigns of 1895 and particularly 1900 in detail. It comes to the conclusion that Price's thesis is almost entirely misplaced, and that the war was almost as dominant an issue in 1900 as Ireland was in 1886, even in working class constituencies.

This chapter's second section will deal with the languages of Imperialism and patriotism. Many historians have contended that political discourses in the 1880s and especially the 1890s assumed a distinctly imperial character.[15] What this meant in practice went well beyond a widespread interest in foreign policy, but the installation of Imperialism as an almost universal overarching paradigm through which contemporaries understood and expressed the politics, culture, and society of late-Victorian and early-Edwardian Britain.[16] This – for historians such as Windscheffel, Shannon,

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[12] Price, *An Imperial War*, pp. 105, 120-1, 124-6, 128.

[13] Those who have challenged Price include Readman, 'The General Election of 1900', pp.109-11; Windscheffel, *Popular Conservatism*, p.182; Sharpe, 'The 1900 General Election', p.411. There are also historians who – while they do not explicitly disagree with Price, nevertheless paint a 'khaki' picture of the election. See G. Stedman Jones, 'Working-Class Politics in London, 1870-1900' in G. Stedman Jones (ed.) *Languages of Class* (Cambridge, 1983); P. Summerfield, 'Patriotism and Empire: Music Hall Entertainment, 1870-1914' in J. MacKenzie (ed.), *Imperialism and Popular Culture* (Manchester, 1986); M. Blanch, 'British Society and the War' in Peter Warwick (ed.), *The South African War: The Anglo-Boer War 1899-1902* (Harlow, 1980). Works which have been influenced by Price's thesis include Feutchwanger, *Democracy and Empire*; D. Brooks, *The Age of Upheaval: Edwardian Politics, 1899-1914* (Manchester, 1995); G. Searle, *A New England?: Peace and War, 1886-1918* (Oxford, 2005); E. Green, *The Crisis of Conservatism: the Politics, Economics and Ideology of British Conservatism, 1880-1914* (London, 1994). For further discussion, see Sharpe, 'The 1900 General Election', p.393.

[14] B. Porter, *The Absent-Minded Imperialists: What the British really thought about the Empire* (Oxford, 2004); M. Brodie, *The Politics of the Poor: The East End of London 1885-1914* (Oxford, 2004), pp.101-3.

[15] Hamer, *Liberal Politics*, p.231; A. Thompson, 'The Language of Imperialism and the meanings of Empire: Imperial Discourse in British politics, 1895-1914', *Journal of British Studies* (1997), p.170; Green, *Crisis*, ch.2.
R. Shannon, *The Crisis of Imperialism, 1865-1915* (1974); Windscheffel, *Popular Conservatism*, p.188.

[16] See for example, A. Burton, *Empire in Question: reading, writing, and teaching British Imperialism* (Durham, 2011); T. Koditschek, *Liberalism, Imperialism, and the Historical Imagination: Nineteenth-Century Visions of Great Britain* (Cambridge, 2011); Z. Magubane, *Bringing the Empire Home: Race, Class, and Gender in Britain and Colonial South Africa* (Chicago, 2004); C. Hall and S. Rose, *At Home with the Empire: Metropolitan Culture and the Imperial World* (New York, 2006). See also C. Hall, 'The State of Modern British History', *History Workshop Journal* (2011), pp.207-8. In her recent commentary on the state of modern British historiography since the 1970s, Hall argues that one of the most important developments in recent decades has been a new interest in the interconnections between the domestic and the imperial, rather

Matthew, Green, Charmley, McKenzie, and Silver – encouraged grassroots candidates (particularly Unionists) to play what Green has called 'the patriotic-imperial card'.[17] In other words, speakers supposedly emphasised imperial issues, and employed patriotic vocabulary in doing so. This section will use the corpus to assess this view. It argues that it fails to take into account the ebb and flow of imperial vocabulary throughout the period, and relies too heavily on the individual contests of 1886 and 1900 which were arguably exceptional rather than typical. This has caused historians to overestimate the consistently imperial content of electoral language, when in actual fact campaigns such as 1892 and even 1895 featured little such vocabulary.

The second part of this section is qualitative, and will tackle two shortcomings that arguably hamper the debate on Imperialism. The first is that we still have comparatively little appreciation of the *applied* use of imperial and patriotic vocabulary. This is because historians – influenced by the linguistic turn – have been reluctant to ascribe political ownership to the languages of Imperialism and patriotism, and see them as contested.[18] While this view has deepened our understanding of multifarious competing discourses, it has also made it difficult to assess power and political advantage: in other words, how far Unionists and Liberals used the language of Imperialism, and which party profited from it more. When this is placed alongside the other popular view – that Empire was a paradigm which underpinned the very fabric of politics and society in the period – we are left with the rather unhelpful conclusion that the language of Imperialism was used by almost everyone, and could nevertheless mean almost anything. The second shortcoming of current scholarship is that historians have often been unhelpfully vague on the difference, if any, between the languages of patriotism and Imperialism.[19] The tendency has been to see them as one and the same, and this is epitomized by phrases such as 'patriotic-imperial card' (Green) and 'imperialistic and patriotic appeals' (Price).[20] This section will attempt to differentiate the languages of patriotism and Imperialism, and assess which party used them more successfully from the platform.

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than their binary separation. The recent interest in the portrayal of Empire in domestic politics, although not explicitly cited by Hall, is surely also reflective of this trend.

[17] Historians who see 'imperial' appeals as being key – particularly amongst Unionists – in both 1895 and 1900 (and, indeed, the closing two decades of the nineteenth century generally) are R. McKenzie and A. Silver, *Angels in Marble: Working Class Conservatives in Urban England*, pp.50-57; H. Matthew, 'Rhetoric and Politics' in P. Waller (ed.), *Politics and Social Change in Modern Britain* (1987), p.49; M. Roberts, '"Villa toryism" and Popular Conservatism in Leeds, 1885-1902', *Historical Journal* (2006), pp.238-9'; Shannon, *Age of Salisbury*, pp. 234-36; Windscheffel, *Popular Conservatism*, pp.163-195; E. Green, *Crisis*, pp.59-77.

[18] Thompson, 'The Language of Imperialism', p.147, 150; P. Readman, 'The Liberal Party and Patriotism in early twentieth century Britain', *20th Century British History* (2001), p.271; M. Taylor, 'John Bull and the Iconography of Public Opinion in England, c.1712-1929', *Past and Present* (1992), p.126; Green, *Crisis*, pp.59-60,67; T. Otte, "Avenge England's Dishonour': By-Elections, Parliament and the Politics of Foreign Policy in 1898', *English Historical Review* (2006), pp.422-4; Windscheffel, *Popular Conservatism*, pp.54-83; Lynch, *Liberal Party*, pp.156-7, 166-7.

[19] Thompson has argued that 'by the 1890s, it was becoming difficult to separate patriotism and Imperialism'. See Thompson, 'The Language of Imperialism', p.164.

[20] Green, *Crisis*, p.76; Price, *An Imperial War*, p.128.

This chapter's third and final section deals with the so-called Liberal 'faddists'. In the last two decades of the nineteenth century, the Liberals were becoming increasingly influenced by various militant interest groups and associations nursing particular grievances, in particular moralistic Nonconformists, temperance reformers, and pacifists.[21] This influence, as a number of historians have suggested, profoundly affected the content and tenor of Liberal electoral appeals, and correspondingly equipped the Conservatives with a new and powerful rhetorical resource: namely that their opponents were crotchetiers, killjoys, and cranks obsessed with parochial and irrelevant pet projects when the future of the Empire was at stake. While the influence of faddism has been extensively explored in high politics, we still have little idea of how and how far it manifested itself in election rhetoric. Indeed, it has perhaps too easily been assumed that because faddism was symptomatic of political and intellectual disunity in the Liberal Party, that it was forwarded without enthusiasm by candidates, and attracted little interest from voters.[22] This section will analyse three issues famously associated with the faddists: militaristic jingoism, Church of England monopoly, and temperance. It contends that historians have underestimated the cohesion of their supposedly multifarious appeals, and suggests that they *did* possess an important common principle besides moralising: namely, that they were an attack on irrational passions in politics. For Liberals, a rational electorate where the working class were in a majority would not return a Conservative government unless its rationality was compromised, and religious servitude, patriotic fervour, and alcoholic intoxication all accomplished this. To a large degree, this preoccupation with rationality also led to an instinctive distaste for political behaviour fired by unthinking passions.[23] This high-minded view of politics was electorally problematic: passion, as Freeden has argued, represented 'an effective shortcut to securing recruitment to political causes'.[24] This chapter contends that the Liberal obsession with what Graham Wallas called 'the intellectualist fallacy' of a purely rational electorate placed the party at a disadvantage in the partisan arena of the post-reform platform when simple appeals and binary caricatures were arguably the staple of successful electioneering rhetoric.[25]

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[21] D. Hamer, *The Politics of Electoral Pressure: a Study in the History of Victorian Reform Agitations* (Hassocks, 1977), pp.2-8; Lawrence, *Speaking for the People*, p.194.

[22] The works of Hamer, Matthew, Sykes, and Blewett deal mostly, or exclusively, with high politics. The same is generally true of scholarship concerning the various targets of the faddists: see for example J. Greenaway, *Drink and British Politics Since 1830: A study in policy-making* (Basingstoke, 2005); Thompson, 'Language of Imperialism', and D. Bebbington, *The Nonconformist Conscience: Chapel and Politics, 1870-1914* (1982). Liberal faddism is referred to only in passing in the local studies of Lynch, *Liberal Party*, p.135, and Windscheffel, *Popular Conservatism*, p.181. Lawrence, *Speaking for the People*, pp.194-5 and 208-9 is more thorough, as is Cassidy, 'Temperance and the 1895 General Election'.

[23] M. Freeden, 'Liberal passions: Reason and Emotion in late- and post-Victorian Liberal thought', in P. Ghosh and L. Goldman (eds.) *Politics and Culture in Victorian Britain* (New York, 2006), pp.136-43.

[24] Freeden, 'Liberal Passions', p. 37.

[25] G. Wallas, *Human Nature in Politics* (London, 1908), pp.22-29.

III

The Contents of the Campaigns

The natural first question historians ask of a general election campaign is perhaps the simplest: what was the contest actually about? In other words, which issues were emphasised by candidates and parties across the country? Unfortunately, in a body of discourse as large as a national election campaign, where millions of words were uttered from platforms up and down the country, the answer is far from obvious. It is problematic – as recent local studies have demonstrated – to assume that the orations of national leaders in and outside Parliament necessarily set the agenda in the constituencies. This makes election campaigns extremely challenging to meaningfully summarise, generalise, and interpret on a national scale.

Paul Readman, Neal Blewett, and A.K. Russell have provided a solution in the form of aggregate analyses of election addresses (the short printed manifestos issued by each candidate).[26] A large number are held in *The National Liberal Club Collection*, and these historians have produced statistics showing the percentage of addresses (in 1895, 1900, 1906, and 1910) that mentioned particular issues, and which of these issues were commonly prioritised.[27] They contend – in the words of Blewett – that addresses 'tell us more conveniently than anything else what issues the politicians thought would determine…choice [of party], and therefore what questions figure most prominently in the constituency campaigns, and how such questions were tackled'.[28] Russell, for example, shows that in 1906 Liberals mentioned amending the Education Act in 86% of addresses, and this was thus the second most important issue of the campaign, behind Free Trade (98%) but ahead of licensing reform (78%) and Chinese Labour (75%).[29] Readman, meanwhile, partly sustains his argument that the Unionist emphasised social reforms in 1895 by citing the relatively high proportion of addresses which featured issues such as Old Age Pensions (52%), worker's compensation (36%), and poor law reform (26%).[30] In a general sense, these analyses have allowed historians to summarise more confidently the contents of campaigns, and it is no surprise that they have been widely cited.[31]

While this method is undoubtedly useful, the explanatory power of addresses has perhaps been pushed too far. This is because the core assumption that printed addresses – invariably issued before, or at the beginning of several weeks of campaigning – accurately reflected what was said on the platform, is flawed. For example, it may have been that a candidate indicated support for reform of parliamentary procedure in his address but neglected to mention it a great deal, or at all, in the cut and

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[26] See n.11 above.

[27] *The National Liberal Club Collection* (Brighton, 1984-5), 28 microfilm reels.

[28] Blewett, *Peers*, p.316. See also Readman, 'The 1900 Election', p.111.

[29] Russell, *Liberal Landslide*, p.65.

[30] Readman, 'The 1895 Election', p.479, 491.

[31] See for example Sharpe, 'The 1900 General Election', p.393; Brodie, *The Politics of the Poor*, p.67; M. Cragoe and C. Williams, *Wales and War: Society, Politics and Religion in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (Cardiff, 2007), pp.234; Roberts, 'Villa Toryism', p.232; Windscheffel, *Popular Conservatism*, p.73,78.

thrust of the speaking campaign itself. In 1895, the fact that 52% of Unionist candidates mentioned Old Age Pensions in their addresses leads Readman to reasonably conclude that they formed a mainmast of Unionist platform appeal.[32] However, the evidence from the speeches themselves contradicts this: pensions were mentioned just four times by Unionists in East Anglia in 1895, and just once amongst national speakers. These were exceeded by (for example) 'malt' and 'hops' (10 and 4 mentions respectively) and comfortably by 'fish' (21). The Liberals raised the issue of pensions far less in their addresses (in just 31%), but in speeches, they mentioned them 21 times in East Anglia and 14 times nationally: seven times as often as their opponents. In 1900, where the election address analysis shows pensions declining in importance (being mentioned by just 20% of Unionists) the corpus once again suggests that the reverse was true in speeches. East Anglian Conservatives mentioned the issue 11 times, and the Liberals 39.

This is not to suggest that addresses are always inaccurate; Readman's readings for the prominence of the Boer War in 1900 are, as we shall see, broadly supported by the corpus. However, it presents a strong challenge to the assumption that addresses reliably foreshadowed the speeches themselves. The discrepancy can perhaps be accounted for by remembering that addresses were very different political texts. They were written rather than spoken, and were intended not just as a commentary on issues of the day, but also as a statement of a candidate's beliefs, and a general manifesto on what he would support and oppose if elected. This might mean him mentioning more administrative and uncontroversial matters which might be dealt with in the longer term (such as, for example, an amendment to the Merchant Shipping Act)[33] which might scarcely be mentioned in partisan election debate which, logically, was much more likely to be dominated by controversial matters where parties disagreed. Herein is the greatest problem: that printed addresses issued in advance (which did not, by convention, contain reference or criticism of the opposing candidate) fail to capture the interactivity of debate. They give an artificially insulated picture of rival campaigns as ships that passed in the night when, in reality, they were engaged in full combat. This has perhaps led historians such as Windscheffel and Lynch to exaggerate the extent to which individual candidates were able to pick and choose which issues they campaigned on, and consequently to overplay the heterogeneity of individual speaking campaigns. Doubtless there were – as Price argues – examples of Liberal candidates neglecting to mention the war in election addresses in 1900, but that would not stop their Unionist opponents bringing the issue to the fore on the platform and, by doing so, necessitating a Liberal response.[34] Addresses certainly give a valuable insight into what candidates *thought* was important before a campaign started, but the reality could turn out to be quite different when rival

[32] Readman, 'The 1895 Election', pp.478-9.

[33] Examples of issues mentioned in addresses which were scarcely, if at all mentioned in speeches are numerous. For example, in 1892 T. Kemp mentioned an amendment to the Merchant Shipping Act in his address to King's Lynn, and yet does not mention it in any of his speeches (as reported in the *Lynn Advertiser*, and the *Lynn News:* the town's principal newspapers).

[34] Price, *An Imperial War*, p.105.

speakers locked horns in battle. Escaping the limitations of election address analysis therefore necessarily demands a methodology which uses speeches themselves, rather than a surrogate, to quantify the content of campaigns.

1895

We can now address the contents of the 1895 and 1900 campaigns in detail, and assess the extent to which the historiography, and election address analysis, paints a reliable picture. Turning first to 1895, Readman contends that an important feature of Conservative appeal – aside from opposition to Home Rule, Disestablishment, and House of Lords reform – was an emphasis on social policy, in particular Old Age Pensions (mentioned in 52% of addresses), employers' liability (36%), and working class housing (29%).[35] This was twinned with an attack on Local Veto (61%), which was articulated in libertarian terms as a championing of a working man's right to enjoy his beer and tobacco unmolested by Nonconformist Liberal moral zealotry. Readman's emphasis on the 'positive Unionism' of 1895 is generally supported by Windscheffel, Roberts, Lawrence, David Steele, and Richard Jay[36] and has challenged traditional accounts which saw Salisburyian success as a generally negative phenomenon.[37] As for the Liberals, historians generally agree that the party did not engage widely with social reform, and, as in 1892, lacked a coherent appeal. The Newcastle Programme supposedly provided no more direction or unity than it had three years previously, and the Liberal platform consisted of what Hamer has called 'the creed of opposition': namely, the removal of obstacles to progress like the House of Lords' veto (mentioned in 82% of addresses), the abolition of plural voting (60%), the Disestablishment of the Church in England and Wales (79%), the introduction of Local Veto (72%), and Irish Home Rule (82%).[38] Finally, a number of historians have argued that the language of Imperialism became widespread amongst both parties, most particularly the Conservatives.[39]

Does the corpus support this interpretation? Turning first to social reform, Appendix 4.1 perhaps surprisingly suggests that compensation, poor law reform, education, allotments, pensions, and housing were all mentioned less amongst East Anglian Conservatives than they had been, on average, in the previous four elections, with an aggregate decrease of 30%. In 1900, despite the disappearance of social reform from Unionist addresses, education, pensions, and employers' liability

[35] Readman, 'The Election of 1895', p.493.

[36] Windscheffel, *Popular Conservatism,* pp.72-83; Roberts, 'Villa toryism'; J. Lawrence, 'Class and gender in the making of urban Toryism, 1880-1914', *English Historical Review* (1993); D. Steele, *Lord Salisbury: a Political Biography* (London, 1999), pp.300-301; R. Jay, *Joseph Chamberlain: a political study* (Oxford, 1981), p.197.

[37] J. Cornford, 'The Transformation of Conservatism in the Late Nineteenth Century', *Victorian Studies* (1963), pp.35-77; Marsh, *Discipline*, pp. 195-96; Shannon, *Age of Salisbury*, p. 313; Green, C*risis*, pp. 126-27; Blewett, *Peers*, p. 22.

[38] Hamer, *Liberal Politics*, p. 217; J. Howarth, 'The Liberal Revival in Northamptonshire, 1880-1895: a Case Study in Late Nineteenth Century Elections', *Historical Journal* (1969), p.116; Lynch, *Liberal Party*, p.118; Readman, 'The Election of 1895', p.473, 492; Lawrence, *Speaking for the People*, p.219.

[39] See n.16. above.

were all mentioned slightly more often in speeches than they had been in 1895. On statistical evidence alone, therefore, there seems little evidence to support the argument that (in East Anglia at least) Unionists prioritised social reform: if anything, the reverse appeared to be true.

On the other hand, the statistics perhaps give a slightly misleading picture. When the 86 contexts in which Unionists mentioned social reform in East Anglia in 1895 are examined, well over 50% were clearly positive. Wolton-Isaacson (Eye) declared that 'the incoming Ministry of Lord Salisbury was now certain that a majority would force the question of Old Age Pensions to the front, and would assist those who tried to help themselves', Hare (South-West Norfolk) remarked that 'the proper housing of the working-people was a question to which he...was greatly interested' and Lord Elcho (Ipswich) promised that 'the Unionist Party, if they were returned to office would support Old Age Pensions, an amendment of the Employers' Liability Act, an extension of the Factories Act and other measures to promote trade, and the interests of the working classes'.[40] By 1900, however, having failed to enact Old Age Pensions (despite legislative success elsewhere) Conservatives seemed to be forced to speak to defend their record: 25 of the 30 occasions they mentioned pensions in East Anglia or on the national stage were instances of the speaker rebutting an opponent or defending the Government's inaction.[41] Liberals, by contrast, suddenly discovered pensions as a rhetorical resource: East Anglian speakers mentioned them almost twice as often as they had in 1895 (39 to 21 mentions). Of these, three-quarters consisted of attacks on the Conservatives for their failure to deliver, such as that of a Norfolk speaker who complained that 'at the last election they were told they were to have Old Age Pensions, but they had done nothing whatever to help the aged'.[42]

Overall, then, the tenor of Conservative references to social reform in East Anglia in 1895 was generally more positive than it became in 1900, even though there were fewer mentions of specific proposals. That we should not dismiss the idea of positive Unionism in 1895 is also evidenced by the fact that the party's frontbench seemed a good deal keener on social reform: national Conservative speakers referred to the proposals twice as often (107 aggregate mentions) as they had, on average, in the four previous elections (51) or in 1900 (71), and the National Union of Conservative and

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[40] *Ipswich Journal*, 20 Jul 1895; *Norfolk Chronicle*, 20 Jul 1895; *Ipswich Journal*, 13 Jul 1895.

[41] E.g. *Norfolk Argus*, 29 Sep 1900, Bullard (Norwich): 'They (the Conservatives) were criticised because they had not passed a measure giving Old Age Pensions. When he stood before them in 1895, be and his colleague promised to give the subject their consideration, but they expressly said that they would vote for nothing which would hinder the work of their great friendly societies'; *Ipswich Journal*, 6 Oct 1900, Harben (Eye): 'Mr. Stevenson [his opponent] had brought forward the question of Old Age Pensions again, but he did not believe that Mr. Stevenson had a workable scheme; if he had a workable scheme in his pocket, let him produce it, and then the Government would see what could be done with it.'; *The Times*, 1 Oct 1900, Chamberlain: 'What I promised was not universal Old Age Pensions, which I do not believe in; what I promised was to do my utmost to enable working men to make better provision for their old age, and myself have prepared proposals and schemes in order that they may be practically carried out, every one of those has been carried into law except Old Age Pensions.'

[42] *Eastern Evening News*, 9 Oct 1900.

Constitutional Associations (NUCCA) speaker's manual gave social questions especial priority.[43] However, while we should not overlook the Unionist emphasis on social reform or its positive credentials, it seems hard to argue that they championed it more than did the Liberals in these elections, who registered aggregate East Anglian scores of 134 and 139 for 1895 and 1900 respectively. That said, while the Liberal platform was noisier, it was also perhaps more negative: around a third of mentions were attacks on the Unionists' record, or the House of Lords.

Turning to the Liberals, the most prominent single issue that was repeatedly emphasised was the House of Lords' obstruction of the Home Rule Bill, and a large portion of the 1892-95 ministry's legislation. Figure 4.1 below shows that the House of Lords was mentioned 112 times by Liberal speakers in East Anglia, and 97 times on the national stage, and 44 and 121 times by Conservatives respectively. These figures dwarf those for the other Victorian elections.

[East Anglia]	**CON 1895**	**LIB 1895**	**CON 1900**	**LIB 1900**	**CON Mean 1880-92**	**LIB Mean 1880-92**
House of Lords/Peers	44	112	12	15	5	14

[National Speakers]	**CON 1895**	**LIB 1895**	**CON 1900**	**LIB 1900**	**CON Mean 1880-92**	**LIB Mean 1880-92**
House of Lords/Peers	121	97	7	3	8	14

Figure 4.1: The House of Lords, 1880-1900

The high visibility of the House of Lords in 1895 is unexpected because historians are generally agreed that Rosebery's speech at the Eighty Club at the beginning of the campaign – where he pointed the finger squarely at the Lords for obstructing the will of the people – failed to make reform of the upper house a national issue.[44] Readman argues that the issue 'arose no popular passions on a national scale' despite being mentioned in 79% of election addresses (second only to Irish Home Rule) and

[43] Conservative National Union, *The Campaign Guide: an Election Handbook for Unionist speakers* (Scotland, 1895) gives clear priority to social reform. Its longest chapter is 'The Conservatives and the Working Classes' (pp.36-72), and it includes long lists of measures enacted between 1886 and 1892 and the groups who benefitted, including miners, fishermen, and especially agricultural labourers, see esp. pp.72-76.

[44] *The Times*, 3 Jul 1895.

Sykes contends that 'as a unifying principle, it failed'.[45] However, a Keyword in Context (KWIC) analysis of the 374 instances the Lords were mentioned by both sides (in East Anglia and nationally) clearly suggests that the issue achieved its high word-counts because it both enthused and animated speakers: over 90% were either in the context of fierce attacks by Liberals[46], or dogged defence by their opponents.[47] Indeed, a greater sense of the aggressive Liberal vocabulary can be gained from a word-frequency analysis of sentences where they mentioned 'House of Lords' (3,225 words in total). This is displayed as Figure 4.2 below:[48]

Common Words	Sentences inc. 'House of Lords'	General Lib Vocabulary
Interference	8	0
Mutilate	8	0
Abolition	6	0
Obstruction	6	0
Will of the people	5	0
Reject	4	0
Other pejorative words	55	27

Figure 4.2: The House of Lords: Liberal Vocabulary in 1895 in East Anglia

'General Liberal Vocabulary' is comprised of a random sample of Liberal sentences from 1895 where 'House of Lords' does not appear. It is the same size (3,225 words).

[45] Readman, 'The 1895 Election', pp.469-70, 483; Skyes, *Rise and Fall*, p.135. Rosebery's biographers are scarcely kinder: see McKinstry, *Rosebery*, p.141; Rhodes-James, *Rosebery*, pp.123-24.

[46] Examples include *Suffolk Chronicle*, 6 Jul 1895, Goddard (Ipswich): 'The House of Lords, whose historic record has… been obstruction, and whose greatest joy seems to have been to thwart the real wishes of the people'; *Eastern Evening News*, 8 Jul 1895, Verney (Norwich): 'It was well known that wherever Liberal measures were passed by the House of Commons they met their doom in the House of Lords. It had been truly said that whereas the House of Lords was a tremendous obstructive force as against the Liberals, it was a mere supplementary body to work out the will of the Tories'; *The Times*, 18 Jul 1895, Harcourt: 'When the Liberal Party was in power the House of Lords neutralized, and had for generations neutralized, all Liberal reforms, and *The Times*, 6 Jul 1895, Rosebery: 'The power of resistance of the House of Lords (groans)—a resistance which… projects an anticipatory shadow of death over it [a Liberal bill] even in the lower House.'.

[47]Examples include *Lynn Advertiser*, 20 Jul 1895, Gibson-Bowles (Lynn): 'the House of Lords has…been the friend of the people more than once, and is at present the bulwark of their liberties'; *Norfolk Chronicle*, 13 Jul 1895, Goschen (Norwich): 'What foolish nonsense to talk of the Lords thwarting the will of the people, when the House of Commons was going to thwart the will of the majority of the English and the Scotch'; *The Times*, 18 Jul 1895, Balfour: 'The function of the House of Lords is to preserve the heritage of the people for the people', and *The Times*, 9 Jul 1895, Devonshire: 'It would be monstrous that [the House of Commons] should have the power without check or control of tampering with the most valued as well as the most ancient of our institutions. Under our existing Constitution the House of Lords is…the only check to be placed upon the practice of log-rolling'.

[48] The combined word-count of the Liberal sentences where 'House of Lords' was mentioned is 3,225. The 'General Liberal Vocabulary' column is also weighted to the same number of words to enable a comparison.

Figure 4.2 shows that, compared to a sample of Liberal language from 1895 when the House of Lords *wasn't* mentioned, pejorative words were more than three times as common. Overall, this evidence suggests that the Lords was both a national issue, and one which was highly charged, at least on the platform. What made it loom so much larger than pensions was the sharp disagreement it inspired, and it was the clash of blades rather than the murmur of consensus which made sparks fly on the platform, and which ultimately transformed a national issue into a national *election* issue. On the other hand, while historians have underestimated the purchase of Rosebery's pledge to fight the election on House of Lords reform, this should be set against his high ambition: to make 1895 a single-issue contest.[49] In this light, his attack on the Lords was a pale shadow of Asquith and Lloyd George's assault in December 1910, which inspired 401 Liberal mentions in East Anglia compared to Rosebery's 112.[50]

The remainder of the Liberal platform stemmed, once again, from the Newcastle Programme. The previous chapter argued that historians have generally painted too harsh a picture of the programme in 1892, which in East Anglia enjoyed some success in energising the Liberal grassroots and reconnecting the party with the seemingly successful radicalism of 1885. Three years later in 1895, Figure 4.3 below suggests that the Newcastle proposals achieved still greater prominence in the region:

Issue	**1885-86**	**1885-86**	**1892**	**1892**	**1895**	**1895**
Programme	5	17	30	27	12	39
One-Man-One-Vote	0	0	14	54	4	28
House of Lords	7	12	3	21	44	112
Welsh Disestablishment	1	3	0	4	16	25
Employers' liability	1	2	1	3	6	8
Local veto	2	4	12	8	25	44
District/Parish Councils	12	32	59	80	60	70
Total	**28**	**70**	**119**	**197**	**167**	**326**

Figure 4.3: The Newcastle Programme in East Anglia, 1892-95

Figure 4.3 shows that, despite the fact that the 1892-95 ministry managed to carry only one of the original Newcastle proposals, that East Anglian Liberals mentioned both the programme itself, and four out of its six items, more often than they had in 1892. While still some distance from matching Chamberlain's manifesto of 1885, these scores once again were sufficient to make the Newcastle Programme of 1895 the most important agenda-setting influence in East Anglia in an election

[49] McKinstry, *Rosebery*, p.381.

[50] See Appendix 5.5F.

otherwise bereft of a dominant national issue.[51] Indeed, this popularity at constituency level belied the wishes of Rosebery, who at the start of the campaign had appealed to his party to distance themselves from what he called 'an enormous and multifarious programme...I trust we shall not repeat that mistake at this coming election'.[52] However, East Anglian Liberals were not apologetic, but bullish: over 80% of the 39 mentions of the Newcastle Programme were clearly positive.[53] Beaumont (North-West Norfolk) proclaimed that 'I yield to no man in my adherence to the entire programme of the Liberal Party', Cozens-Hardy (North-Norfolk) declared it 'a great and inspired programme', and an East Norfolk speaker 'hoped the Liberals would not take a single item off their programme'.[54] This evidence perhaps further confirms a trend which had become apparent in 1892: that programme politics were forwarded widely, and with enthusiasm, by Liberal candidates in East Anglia.

Overall, this review of 1895 has suggested that, while recent historians such as Readman, Roberts, and Windscheffel are right to focus on the broadly progressive character of both parties' approaches to this election, that they have perhaps overemphasised the extent to which the 'positive' Conservative message on social reform outshone the Liberal counter-claim. While the Conservatives – particularly through their frontbench speakers – did bring issues of social reform to the fore, this was to no greater an extent than in previous contests such as 1885 or 1892, or compared with their Liberal opponents. The messages that were amplified most loudly were those of House of Lords reform, and particularly the Newcastle Programme, which played a larger role even than in 1892. This suggests that while the Conservatives played their part in influencing the direction of the contest, that the Liberals perhaps played a larger one. Despite their organisational weakness, divided leadership, and ideological confusion, Rosebery's party were still perhaps the more important agenda-setters even in their nineteenth-century electoral nadir, and were thus perhaps less marginalised than historians such as Marsh, Shannon, Rhodes-James and Blewett have suggested.[55]

1900

The historiography of the 1900 election is dominated by the issue of the war, with sharp disagreement as to the extent to which it featured. Readman has argued that it was not just the single most important issue, but that it dominated the campaign, being mentioned as the leading issue in 90% of Unionist and 82% of Liberal addresses.[56] Windscheffel has supported this reading, arguing that the contest 'was fought...largely on the issue of the South African war', and Sharpe's study of Battersea concludes that

[51] Readman, 'The 1895 Election', p.470.

[52] *The Times*, 3 Jul 1895.

[53] The remaining 20% of mentions were simply in neutral (generally factual) contexts. None were negative.

[54] *Lynn News*, 20 Jul 1895; *Eastern Evening News*, 3 Apr 1895; *Eastern Daily Press*, 15 Jul 1895.

[55] Marsh, D*iscipline*, pp.245-46; Shannon, *The Age of Salisbury*, pp.406-21; Rhodes-James, *Rosebery*, p.384; Blewett, *Peers*, p. 21.

[55] Fair, 'From Liberal to Conservative', pp.299-300.

[56] Readman, 'The Election of 1900', pp.113-4.

the Conservative 'khaki' appeal was so robust that they 'barely mentioned domestic questions'.[57] However, Pelling, Green, Searle, Feuchtwanger, and (most recently) Brodie and Porter instead show sympathy to Price's influential thesis, seeing the 'khaki' label as something of a misnomer, and stressing the preponderance of social reform, especially in working class constituencies.[58] Finally, a number of historians who stress the importance of the 'politics of place' also see the war as less important. Paul Nichols argues that the war was often rivalled by local questions such as Ritualism (especially in rural divisions with a large proportion of dissenters) to the degree that 'the fighting in the Transvaal must almost have seemed to resemble the far-off murmur of distant events'.[59] Lynch, meanwhile, defends her argument on the primacy of local community by suggesting that the fighting in South Africa only featured because it *was* in fact a local issue in the countryside given the large number of agricultural labourers that were fighting as army recruits.[60]

The evidence from the corpus comes down decisively in favour of the first interpretation. Appendix 4.2 suggests that, in East Anglia, the impact of the war on the election was enormous. 'Boer', 'Kruger', 'Transvaal' and 'Africa' are all sizeable new entries into the electoral vocabulary, and score (as aggregates) 278 mentions on the Conservative side and 110 on the Liberal, compared with 192 and 209 respectively on the national stage. 'War' advances over fortyfold, from a combined East Anglian party score of 11 in 1895 to 449 in 1900, with an almost identical increase nationally. The average score in the four previous elections was 83, and even if we single out 1880 – the last election which might reasonably have been described as 'khaki' – its score of 216 is still less than half of 1900's. Consistent with this picture are the scores for other military words ('troop', 'army', 'soldier', 'military', and 'navy') which also make similar leaps nationally and locally. Indeed, this explosion in frequency was also foreshadowed by the Parliamentary corpus, where the aggregate scores for all lemmas in Appendix 4.2 increased from 50 in the year preceding the dissolution for the 1895 election, to 577 in the year preceding 1900. This suggests that candidates transferred the agenda from Parliament, to election address, to campaign platform. On this statistical evidence alone, the war was almost as dominant as Ireland had been in 1886, and it would hardly seem unfair to similarly label 1900 as a 'single issue' election.

There are perhaps three objections that might be made to this seemingly powerful conclusion. The first is that the emphasis given to the war in East Anglia was somewhat greater amongst Unionists than it was amongst Liberals. Indeed, Appendix 4.1 demonstrates that the Liberals mentioned issues of social reform as much in 1900 as they had in 1895. However, even the score for 'war' on its own (110) is nearly as much as the readings for all six social issues combined (139). So while it is true to say that Liberal language was nowhere near as monolithic as that of the Unionists (for whom 'war' alone [227]

[57] Windscheffel, *Popular Conservatism*, p.182; Sharpe, 'The 1900 General Election', p.408.

[58] See n.13 and 14 above.

[59] Nicholls, *Khaki and the Confessional*, pp.3-4. Price also recognises the importance of Ritualism in certain constituencies in the South-West. See Price, *An Imperial War*, pp.103-4.

[60] Lynch, *Liberal Party*, p.157.

outscored all six social issues [95] by a factor of more than two-to-one), the 'khaki' tag still seems entirely justified.

The second objection is that the issue of Church Ritualism – in a heavily Nonconformist region such as East Anglia – may have been overlooked as an important election issue.[61] Despite Nicholls' singling-out of East Anglia as an area where Ritualism was important, the corpus suggests that it was largely irrelevant. As Appendix 4.3 shows, 'Ritual' was mentioned a total of six times in 100,000 words of speech by either party, and was not raised at all on the national stage, or in Parliament in the preceding year. Between both parties, the occurrence of religious keywords in East Anglia in 1900 (78) was less than half of what it had been in 1895 (178), and lower than for any other election in the period save 1880. This was not simply an East Anglian phenomenon, as the use of religious language amongst national speakers also declined by 39% from 1895 to 1900. While it is true that some East Anglian Liberals were clearly worried about Ritualism (the Woodbridge candidate Felix Cobbold complained bitterly about the 'lawlessness prevailing in the Church of England') such examples are hard to find and tended to be concentrated in one or two speeches.[62] Indeed, Cobbold's speech (of approximately 3,000 words) contained almost 40% of the Liberal aggregate for religious words in 1900 on its own. On the basis of this evidence, the issue of Ritualism – even in East Anglia – seems to have been an axe ground by a few agitated Nonconformist Liberals, and does not rank even as a secondary election issue.

The third objection is that East Anglia is a poor test-bed for debunking Price's sociological thesis. The region did not contain any clearly working-class constituencies where Price argues social reform was most prominent, and the war least important. Furthermore, Norfolk also contained two divisions with pro-Boer candidates (W.B. Gurdon in the Northern division and R.J. Price in the Eastern) which Price flags as an exception to his general thesis.[63] This objection can be countered by assembling two special corpora: the first a 'pro-Boer corpus' containing only speeches from divisions which were fought by a pro-Boer candidate (Leicester, Harborough, Barnard Castle, Stockton-on-Tees, and both Norfolk seats) and the second a 'working class corpus' containing only constituencies identified as such in Henry Pelling's *Social Geography of British Elections* (Huddersfield, Hartlepool, Bishop Auckland, Liverpool Kirkdale, Liverpool Exchange, Leeds East, and Leeds South).[64] If Price's dissertation stands, we would expect the war to feature much more prominently in the pro-Boer corpus than in the working class corpus. However, Figure 4.4 below – which compares these corpora to East Anglia using the lemmas in Appendix 4.2 – suggests that it did not:

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[61] Nichols, *Khaki and the Confessional*, pp.3-5, 313, 316.

[62] *East Anglian Daily Times*, 20 Sep 1900.

[63] Price, *An Imperial War*, pp.104-5, 120-1, 124.

[64] H. Pelling, *Social Geography of British elections, 1885-1910* (1967), pp. 247-9, 252, 291-5, 297, 301-3, 322-3, 327-8, 337-8, 344. Constituencies for both corpora were simply chosen according to their availability in digital form from the British Library's Nineteenth Century Newspapers Collection. Both corpora contain roughly equal word-counts of Liberal and Conservative speech.

Lemma	East Anglia 1900	Pro-Boer 1900	Working-Class 1900
Boer	48	26	47
Kruger	17	11	0
War	225	234	175
Transvaal	29	24	21
Ammunition	4	4	2
Gun	6	4	28
Army	37	47	33
Soldier	23	20	28
Military	11	5	26
Traitor	5	0	0
Battle	9	5	14
Roberts	8	0	14
Troop	14	9	16
Defend	14	5	47
Fight	46	50	23
Victory	13	7	5
Africa	102	91	96
Enemy	5	8	12
Diplomacy	17	7	2
Peace	20	17	12
Opponent	32	31	44
Majuba	10	1	2
Navy	16	17	2
Total	**704**	**624**	**648**

Figure 4.4: The Prominence of the War in 1900 in Different Groups of Constituencies

See Appendix 4.2. All three corpora show bi-partisan readings weighted to 50,000 word ratios

Figure 4.4 suggests very little difference between East Anglian, pro-Boer, and working-class constituency speaking campaigns. Frequencies of 'Boer', 'War', 'Transvaal', 'Africa' and lemmas relating to the military and combat are remarkably consistent over all three corpora. The aggregate totals for all vocabulary (704, 624, 648 respectively) are also strikingly similar and, perhaps surprisingly, the pro-Boer corpus actually scores lowest of the three. It would appear that the war – like Home Rule in 1886, and Tariff Reform and the House of Lords in 1906 and 1910 – was simply a national issue which transcended politics of place, and its visibility had little to do with either the candidates or the sociological composition of the constituency. This may suggest that it was becoming increasingly difficult to insulate local campaigns from an emerging national political agenda. More substantially, in demonstrating that there was no difference between the stated exemplar and the exception of Price's thesis, these findings – when taken alongside Readman's election address analysis – should persuade us to entirely reject it.

IV
Imperialism and Patriotism

Having reassessed the contents of the 1895 and 1900 campaigns, we are now in a position to move onto our first in-depth case-study. Historians have often stressed the patriotic and imperial character of these elections, and indeed politics more generally from the 1870s on, and see the electoral appeal of Empire as central to Conservative success.[65] This section will begin by using the corpus to assess the issue of Imperialism across the 1880-1910 period, and ask whether this reading is a fair one. It finds that the Empire, like Ireland, attained high visibility only in certain elections. While it would be fair to call 1886, 1900 and the three Edwardian struggles 'imperial', the Empire was seldom mentioned in the other four contests in the period, including in 1895: a campaign seen by Shannon, Windscheffel, Green, Mackenzie, and Silver as an exemplar of the imperial appeal of Salisburyian Conservatism.

This section's second intervention is more qualitative, and concerns the content of Liberal and Conservative languages of Imperialism, especially in the election of 1900. In recent years, historians have increasingly seen Imperialism and patriotism as contested discourses. For Andrew Thompson and others, the terms 'patriotic' and 'imperial' were the object of continual rhetorical struggles for ownership between parties, pressure groups, and influential individuals.[66] Thompson likens the terms to 'an array of empty boxes waiting to be filled, emptied, and refilled by competing discourses.'[67] However, while this scholarship has nuanced our understanding, its conception of Imperialism and patriotism as discourses without owners and without fixed meanings has made it difficult to factor them into explanations of political change or electoral advantage. This chapter aims to help supply this explanation by examining what was distinct about competing Liberal and Conservative articulations of patriotism and Imperialism in East Anglia, and nationally. It will also ask whether the reluctance of historians to differentiate between the two concepts is justified.

While this chapter accepts the recent interpretation of Imperialism as a contested discourse, it also argues, in the arena of electoral politics, that the contest was won mainly by the Conservatives. Their speakers used Imperialism in an overtly jingoistic, bellicose, and essentially more partisan manner, whereas Liberal uses were plainer, administrative, and often relied on complex argumentation which perhaps carried less punch in the mass arena of politics. Herein arguably lay the applied difference between the languages of Imperialism and patriotism: that proponents of the former had an automatic claim to the latter, but not vice-versa. In other words, challenging the patriotic credentials of an avowed imperialist was extremely difficult, whereas the erection of an anti-imperial patriotic platform – which focussed on a broader 'love of country' – was prone to attack and misrepresentation.[68] In this respect, the Conservatives – through colourful appeals to nation and the past, veneration of the military, and a generally more aggressive and binary vocabulary which

[65] See n.17 above.

[66] See n.18 above.

[67] Thompson, 'Language of Imperialism', p.147, 150.

[68] For more on the Liberal claims of patriotism, see Readman, 'The Liberal Party and Patriotism', pp.272-9.

focussed on traitor or loyalist, and friend or foe – used Imperialism as an effective shorthand for patriotism. The 'sane Imperialism' of Campbell-Bannerman and the Liberals – for all its undoubted intellectual merits – appeared convoluted in comparison.

To begin, we will use the corpus to measure the fluctuating visibility of imperial vocabulary throughout the 1880-1910 period in East Anglia, and nationally. The readings for a five-word taxonomy (consisting of the lemmas 'imperial', 'Empire', 'colony', 'flag' and 'British') is shown below as Figure 4.5. To make the graph readable, the scores for the five taxonomy words is aggregated in each instance: for a full breakdown, see Appendix 4.10.

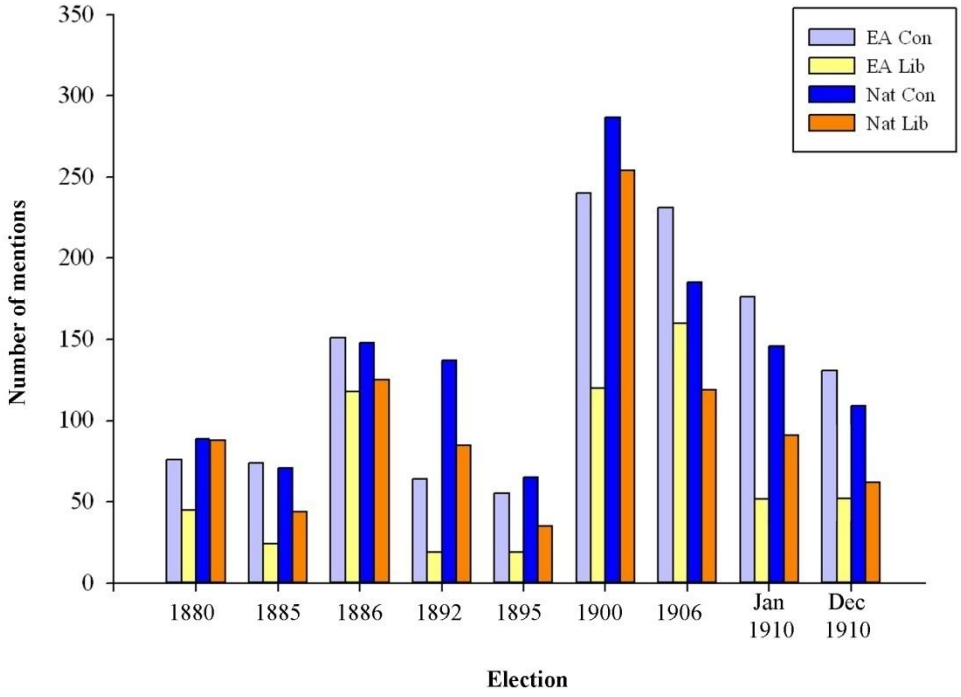

Figure 4.5: The Language of Imperialism, 1880-1910.

See Appendix 4.10.

Figure 4.5 displays a number of interesting trends. Perhaps most striking is that grassroots and national Conservatives are ahead of Liberals in each equivalent subsample throughout the whole period. In East Anglia, their scores are particularly strong: consistently roughly double that of their opponents, except in 1886 and 1906. On the national stage, however, Conservative leads are generally more modest, especially in the Edwardian period. Overall, while these readings suggest – as Thompson and Readman have argued – that there was no Unionist monopoly on imperial vocabulary, their leads are nonetheless consistent and often sizeable. Indeed, that the Liberals on the national stage used imperial vocabulary more often is relatively unsurprising when one considers the inevitably more national and international ambit of frontbenchers' speeches as opposed to those of grassroots candidates. Therefore, the consistent Conservative leads in East Anglia are perhaps more significant because they suggest – in a local arena where matters of foreign and imperial policy were less compulsory – that their speakers *chose* to prioritise Imperialism when Liberal opponents frequently did not. This suggests that East Anglian Unionists either saw Imperialism as more important, as a richer rhetorical resource, or both.

The second noteworthy point concerns the visibility of Imperialism in the 1880-1910 period in general, and the readings for the 1895 general election in particular. Figure 4.5 suggests that its language was the least imperial of any election in this period. Indeed, its aggregate scores are lower than equivalents pertaining to other supposedly more minor issues, such as Local Veto.[69] Even the aggregate scores for 'school', 'education', and 'child' (just three lemmas, not five) are ahead of the imperial taxonomy in two of the 1895 subsamples, and mentions of House of Lords reform is always ahead by a large margin.[70] The relatively low priority given to Empire in this election – even by Conservative speakers – is also demonstrated by the fact that only 11% of Unionist candidates thought it important enough to merit inclusion in their election addresses.[71] It was also hardly prominent in the NUCCA speaker's guidebook for 1895: 'Unity and Integrity of the Empire' was chapter fifteen, appearing behind those on fishermen, miners, and agricultural labourers. It was also just fourteen pages in length, one of the shortest in the 636-page manual.[72] On balance, 1895 seems more similar to 1892 than 1900, and some historians have been guilty of overplaying its imperial credentials. Windscheffel's emphasis is of course partly explained by the probability that London – as the capital of the Empire – inspired a disproportionately imperial political discourse. However, it is still telling that his chapter 'The Imperial City, 1895-1900' features 82 footnotes from sources from 1900, and just 22 for 1895.[73]

Overall, historians have perhaps too easily extrapolated the general from the particular, and assumed that Imperialism – because it was prominent in 1886 and 1900 – was characteristic of the period in general. While Figure 4.5 confirms that 1886, 1900, and (perhaps most surprisingly) 1906 featured a high concentration of imperial vocabulary, the bars for 1880, 1885, 1892, and 1895 sit at a considerably lower level.[74] This suggests that the discourse of late-Victorian electoral politics was not consistently freighted with imperial vocabulary as has been widely assumed. In fact, it is the four later contests in the period – beginning with 1900 – that show a more discernible shift in this direction. Overall, Figure 4.5 suggests that Empire could remain central to British culture, society, and politics without necessarily dominating the platform of each campaign. It was an elastic election issue, and its prominence could rise and fall from contest to contest.

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[69] A five word taxonomy for Local Veto in 1895 – consisting of 'Local Veto', 'beer', 'drink', 'public house' and 'publican' scores 64 amongst East Anglian Conservatives (25, 21, 3, 12, 3) and 51 amongst Liberals (16, 16, 5, 12, 2). On the national stage, it scores 44 among Conservatives (16, 4, 13, 3, 8) and 37 amongst Liberals (9, 4, 10, 0, 4). The combined 1895 Local Veto score for all readings is 196, whereas the Imperialism equivalent score is just 135.

[70] The scores for 'education', 'school' and 'child' are: East Anglian Conservative: 36 (15, 9, 12), Liberal: 45 (16, 19, 10). Amongst national Conservatives, they are: 105 (35, 55, 15), Liberal: 40 (23, 8, 9). For 'House of Lords' (in the context of reform) the scores are 44 and 112 respectively for Conservatives and Liberals in East Anglia, and 121 and 97 on the national stage.

[71] Readman, 'The 1895 Election', p.493.

[72] Conservative National Union, *The Campaign Guide* (1895), pp.544-58,

[73] Windscheffel, *Popular Conservatism*, pp.163-95.

[74] The score for 1906 is accounted for largely by Tariff Reform which (unlike in the elections of 1910) was articulated primarily as Colonial Preference, and its imperial dimensions stressed. See Chapter Five below, pp.196-7.

The Unionists and Imperialism

Let us turn, then, to the language itself, and ask what was distinctive about the Unionist presentation of Imperialism. For Readman, the first of three main strings to the Unionist bow in 1900 was the boast that they were supporting the army and military heroes like Lord Roberts, while the Liberals were sympathetic to Kruger and the Boers. The second was a libertarian articulation of the necessity of upholding the rights and freedoms of all British subjects (even *uitlanders* in the outer reaches of the Empire in southern Africa), and the third was the essentiality of truly imperial, kingdom-wide policies which rose above their opponents' supposed obsession with petty parochial trivia.[75] Much of this was undoubtedly true for East Anglian Conservatives, who focussed on simple celebrations of imperial greatness, stressed the superior military credentials of their candidates and their party's fighting spirit, and contrasted Unionist unity with their divided opponents.

Celebrations of Empire were often grandiose, even in 1895 when they appeared less often. John Colomb (Yarmouth) asked his audience to 'remember the one feeling which should dominate every Englishman's mind: "I am an Englishman – part of the great United Kingdom and the magnificent British Empire, and it is my duty to maintain...the honour and integrity in Englishman and the fame and renown of the whole English race."'[76] In 1900, Gibson-Bowles (King's Lynn) pointed to a Union Jack pinned above his platform and asked his audience to:

'Look at that flag …it has a great and glorious history. There are no standards of Europe…that have not gone down before that flag…do not forget its past. That flag floated at the mainmast of the *Victory* when Nelson sailed into action at Trafalgar; that flag waved over the British squares at Waterloo…God grant that this flag, which so many times has shaken out its folds and brought freedom to the slave, comfort to the oppressed, may once more honour the name of Victoria'.[77]

The vastly increased prominence of military vocabulary in Unionist rhetoric in 1900 (see Appendix 4.2) was not just veneration of Lord Roberts and the army, but also a celebration of the general expansion of imperial territory. Bullard (Norwich) and Pretyman (Woodbridge) boasted that 'Lord Salisbury had demonstrated the might of the Empire by sending 200,000 men 7,000 miles', a military manoeuvre which 'no other nation could hope to accomplish'.[78] Meanwhile, Foster (Lowestoft) declared that more territory had been added to the Empire than in any other five-year period.[79] This

[75] Readman, 'The Election of 1900', pp.117-122.

[76] *Norfolk Chronicle,* 6 Jul 1895.

[77] *Lynn Advertiser*, 28 Sept 1900. For further colourful examples, see *Norfolk Argus,* 29 Sept 1900 (Norwich) and 13 Oct 1900 (Mid Norfolk).

[78] *Norfolk Argus,* 29 Sept 1900; *East Anglian Daily Times,* 29 Sept 1900.

[79] *East Anglian Daily Times,* 29 Sept 1900.

swagger perhaps demonstrated an increasing confidence in Imperialism as an ideology; in 1880, the scale of military operations and territorial expansion achieved by the respective ministries of Disraeli and Gladstone often represented albatrosses for their parties.[80] The change in the political weather was well-demonstrated when the Liberal Unionist Ffolkes (Norfolk North-West) rebutted his opponent's accusation that for the cost of a single gun, 500 labourers' families could be kept in comfort, by asking: 'Where would the families be without that gun?...England would become a province of France…where would the Union Jack be if not for our guns?'.[81] It seems doubtful that such a bellicose defence would have been made (for example) in the political climate of 1885, when rural poverty was so high on the agenda.

While these appeals corroborate the picture painted by Appendix 4.2, they do little to shed light on what distinguished Unionist articulations of Imperialism in 1900, other than flagging their strong military flavour. This merits further consideration, particularly because in East Anglia, eight of the twenty Unionist candidates had some link to the forces.[82] Military candidates were also important elsewhere: Windscheffel notes that six of the twelve new London Unionist MPs in 1900 had connections to the army or navy, and Lynch demonstrates that Major Stuart-Wortley, who initially seemed a weak candidate for South Oxfordshire, in fact turned out to be an asset.[83] Certainly, it appears that in East Anglia, these military candidates directly exploited their advantage: Priorleau (East-Norfolk) and Mann (South-Norfolk) explained their absences from their constituencies by their involvement with the Fourth Norfolk Militia.[84] Hare (South-West Norfolk), spoke of the honour he felt as he led his regiment in a parade through the county, Gibson-Bowles recalled his involvement in the Franco-German war during the siege of Paris, and the *Lynn Advertiser* insisted that East-Norfolk candidate William Boyle – who had never been in the forces – was still a military man by dint of his distant (and until now forgotten) descent from a Knight-Commander of the Hanoverian Guelphite order.[85] While their military credentials might have sounded impressive, these eight East Anglian Unionist candidates actually did badly at the poll, sustaining an average swing against them of 2.5% from 1895. While striking, this may have been more a product of the peculiarities of rural Norfolk: the five military men who stood in these seats all received swings against them, whereas the reverse was true for the remaining three in Norfolk boroughs and in Suffolk. The reverse was also true in London – where the six new military MPs achieved a substantial 7% average swing in their favour – and for absentee candidates out fighting in South Africa, who outperformed others by 1.9%.[86] However, while

[80] T. Lloyd, *The General Election of 1880* (Oxford, 1968), p.38, 141; J. Parry, *The Rise and Fall of Liberal Government in Victorian Britain* (New Haven, 1993), pp.290-2.

[81] *Lynn Advertiser*, 5 Oct 1900.

[82] These were: Colomb (Yarmouth), Follett (North Norfolk), Pretyman (Woodbridge), Gibson-Bowles (Lynn), Priorleau (East-Norfolk), Mann (South-Norfolk), Hare (South-West Norfolk), Boyle (Mid Norfolk).

[83] Windscheffel, *Popular Conservatism*, pp.182-83; Lynch, *Liberal Party*, p.159.

[84] *Norfolk Argus*, 29 Sept 1900 (both references).

[85] *Lynn Advertiser*, 28 Sept 1900 (all three references).

[86] Readman, 'The Election of 1900', p.139.

this mixed evidence suggests no clear trend, the bellicosely khaki appeal of these candidates suggests that Unionists certainly *thought* military connections were a plus.

While a straightforward appeal to khaki lay at the heart of the Unionist campaign in 1900, the affect on language was also often subtle. In particular, the general rhetoric of electioneering in East Anglia became increasingly freighted with the vocabulary of battle. As Appendix 4.4 indicates, references to 'fight', 'victory', 'duty', 'honour', 'loyal', 'opponent', and 'strength' were at their peak in 1900. As an aggregate, both the Conservative and Liberal scores (182 and 147) were the highest for their respective parties in any election in the period in East Anglia, as Figure 4.6 below demonstrates. Although far from numerically overwhelming, the significance of these 1900 advances should be viewed in the light of remarkably static readings from the five previous elections, and indeed the subsequent decline of the language of battle in the Edwardian period:

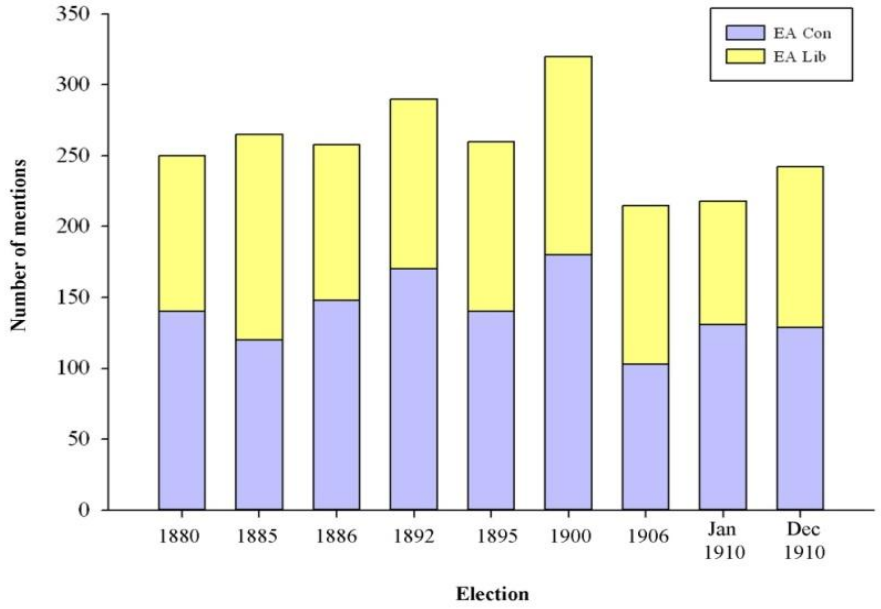

Figure 4.6: The Language of Battle, 1880-1910.

See Appendix 4.4.

While Figure 4.6 is interesting, the aggregate readings perhaps disguise a more subtle underlying shift in the language of battle in 1900. In many ways – given the masculine and bellicose general environment of pre-1918 political culture – it is hardly surprising that electoral language was consistently combative on both sides.[87] In 1895, for example, the Liberal Lord Wodehouse (East-Norfolk) expressed doubts that his opponent Henry Rider-Haggard was 'worthy of our steel' given that he preferred 'writing charming books for children' above toiling in the fields.[88] In the same contest, Coaks (Norwich) warned his party against 'hitting below the belt', and Gurdon (Mid-Norfolk) declared

[87] Lawrence, 'Class, Gender, and the Making', pp.644-6; J. Tosh, 'Hegemonic Masculinity and the History of Gender', in J. Tosh, S. Dudink, K. Hagemann (eds.) *Masculinities in Politics and War: Gendering Modern History* (Manchester, 2004), p.50.

[88] *Eastern Evening News*, 18 Mar 1895.

that 'he had not had a beating before, and he hoped he could take a beating as an Englishman should…they were not going to submit to this like a lot of Chinamen without making a fight of it'.[89]

In 1900, however, the 'khaki' climate encouraged Unionists to use military metaphors, and describe their electioneering efforts as military – as opposed to simply manly – endeavours. The motto introduced by Mann to his South-Norfolk volunteers was to 'fight like bobs and win!' and Priorleau told his supporters to 'all work like blacks, and not enter the fight with any idea they were going to lose'.[90] Ffolkes and his supporters – challenging the Liberal stronghold North-West Norfolk – were said to have 'fought like Baden-Powell had done in the defence of Mafeking' and Boyle was accompanied by a brass band which played 'See the Conquering Hero Come'.[91] Occasionally, candidates simply articulated voting Unionist as an extension of national duty: Gibson-Bowles concluded a speech by saying: 'I tell you it is your duty to vote for me! For the sake of your country, do your duty on the day of the election'.[92] Hare, meanwhile, reassured his East-Norfolk audience that although 'all of them would have liked to have been out at the front' the young men who came forwards to 'help in his battle' would also be helping to smite Kruger and the Boers.[93] As John Tosh has argued, this 'militarisation of hegemonic masculinity served to bolster the indispensability of manly attributes', and it is notable that any similar emphasis on militarism and duty was almost wholly absent from equivalent Liberal appeals, which remained largely as they had in peacetime.[94]

The final part of the Unionists' imperial appeal in 1900 was a full-blooded assault on their Liberal opponents as weak, divided, and of questionable loyalty. Their general inclination to pacifism would make them 'shrink from the dread responsibility of war' (Rawlinson, Ipswich), give 'opposition to everything connected the defence of the nation' (Hoare, Norwich), and make them 'turn tail and ran away' from the Boers (Priorleau).[95] The Unionist approach was strikingly partisan: even if a Liberal candidate was not a pro-Boer himself, he was still from the same party as sympathisers such as Ellis, Labouchere, and Clark. This idea of 'guilt by association' was also extended more widely: to connect Liberals with the pro-Boer Irish Parliamentary Party, with Gladstone who had abandoned Gordon in Khartoum and presided over the debacle at Majuba Hill, and with the anti-British continental press, who apparently wanted a Liberal victory.[96] The act of agreeing with a 'disloyal' agency of any kind (even in the distant past, or over an issue unrelated to foreign policy) was enough to contaminate a Liberal candidate.

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[89] *Norfolk Chronicle,* 6 Jul 1895; *Lynn Advertiser,* 20 Jul 1895.

[90] *Norfolk Argus,* 29 Sept 1900, p.5, p.7.

[91] *Lynn Advertiser,* 25 May 1900; *Norfolk Argus,* 13 Oct, p.2.

[92] *Lynn Advertiser,* 28 Sept 1900, p.6.

[93] *Lynn Advertiser,* 28 Sept 1900, p.5.

[94] Tosh, 'Hegemonic Masculinities', p.55.

[95] *East Anglian Daily Times,* 28 Sept 1900; *Norfolk Argus,* 29 Sept 1900; *Norfolk Chronicle,* 6 Oct 1900.

[96] *Norfolk Argus,* 29 Sept 1900; Mann (South-Norfolk), *East Anglian Daily Times,* 29 Sept 1900, Eastlagh (Lowestoft).

Many Liberals were instinctively unhappy with describing themselves as 'imperialists', a term which, prior to the outbreak of the war in 1898, held numerous negative as well as positive political connotations: of reckless territorial expansion, unjustified violations of sovereignty, and was associated with the military adventurism, political demagoguery, and authoritarianism of foreign powers such as Napoleon III's France.[97] Because few Liberals openly opposed the second Boer War, and confined themselves mainly to criticising the government's handling of military preparations, it has often been argued that they failed to articulate a coherent counter-vision to the Unionists' khaki Imperialism.[98] However, this view has recently been challenged. Hamer and Thompson have argued that the emerging 'Liberal-Imperialism' of Lord Rosebery – which focussed on social reform at home as well as military affairs abroad – was gaining widespread traction in the party at the grassroots, and Otte's study of by-elections from 1898 has demonstrated its increased prominence on Liberal platforms.[99] Readman has perhaps gone furthest, arguing that Liberals in the 1900s 'made extensive use of patriotism in their speeches, election addresses, and publications'.[100]

While our above analysis of Appendix 4.2 suggested that Liberals were consistently outscored by their opponents on both the war in 1900, and Imperialism in general throughout the period, it also clearly confirmed that there was nothing approaching a Unionist monopoly. Indeed, it is perhaps telling that Liberals in East Anglia mentioned 'patriotism' the same number of times as Conservatives in East Anglia (13), while on the national stage, they outscored them by 41-14. Some of these mentions mirrored the simpler celebrations of patriotism by Unionists: a King's Lynn Liberal declared 'true liberalism in politics' as being 'purely patriotic in national service and national life' and Adams (Lowestoft) claimed 'I am neither Liberal nor Conservative, I am patriotic'.[101] Indeed, both East Anglian parties, not just the Conservatives, widely used Union Jacks as party icons in both 1895 and 1900.[102] However, the vast majority (80%) of the 54 aggregate Liberal mentions of 'patriotism' in 1900 were challenges to the notion that the Unionists were the more patriotic party, and attempts to reclaim

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[97] Green, *Crisis*, p.60; Hamer, *Liberal Politics*, p.270-1, 287; Sykes, *Rise and Fall*, pp.134-6. For a fuller account of the shifting semantic meanings of the word 'Imperialism' in late Victorian politics, see R. Koebner and H. Schmidt, *Imperialism: the Story and Significance of a Political Word, 1840-1960* (Cambridge, 1964), esp .ch.6. See also J. Parry, *The Politics of Patriotism: English Liberalism, National Identity and Europe, 1830-1886* (Cambridge, 2006), pp.387-99.

[98] See esp. H. Cunningham, 'The Conservative Party and patriotism', in R. Colls and P. Dodd, (eds.) *Englishness: Politics and Culture, 1880-1920* (1986), p.24. This thesis has been influential, and is often cited by scholars in other fields. See Readman, 'The Liberal Party and Patriotism', p.270.

[99] Otte, 'Avenge England's Dishonour', p.423; Thompson, 'The Language of Imperialism', pp.156-9; Hamer, *Liberal Politics*, pp.263-77.

[100] Readman, 'The Liberal Party and Patriotism', p.272. It should be noted that Readman clearly intends his argument to apply to both imperial and non-imperial forms of patriotism.

[101] *Lynn News*, 29 Sept 1900; *East Anglian Daily Times*, 28 Sept 1900.

[102] See for example, reports of meetings in *Ipswich Journal*, 6 Oct 1900; *Cambridge Express* 29 Sept 1900; *Eastern Evening News*, 16 Jul 1895.

the idea on behalf of Liberalism.[103] George White (North-West Norfolk) questioned the stereotype that 'every officer is a Tory' or that 'Tommy Atkins is a Unionist', and Winfrey (South-West Norfolk) remarked that 'the Tory party might attempt to allocate themselves a monopoly on patriotism, but the Liberal Party were equally as patriotic as the Tories and equally proud of the British Empire'.[104] These appeals closely echoed Edward Grey's attack on the 'gigantic imposture...on the Government side to claim for themselves and their supporters a monopoly of patriotism'.[105]

As well as defending their own imperial and patriotic credentials, the Liberals also articulated their own version of 'love of country' which, as Readman has suggested, claimed to be a 'high-minded patriotic constitutionalism' or what that Campbell-Bannerman simply called 'sane Imperialism'.[106] This supposedly more intelligent variety of patriotism was characterised by a distaste for imperial aggression, a reservation of the right to criticise military decisions and conduct, a suspicion of blind adherence to flag, and paying due attention to social conditions at home. It was opposed to excessive force not simply for pacifistic reasons, but because diplomacy was often wiser. Winfrey was not alone in arguing that 'the war might have been avoided with wiser and more tactful diplomacy', something that Chamberlain (who had called Kruger to a 'squeezed sponge' and likened negotiating with Russia to 'supping with the devil with a long spoon') understood poorly.[107] It was patriotic also to question the tactical decisions of generals or the state of armaments in order to learn from mistakes and maximise military efficiency, just as it was patriotic to consider the whole war machine (most of whose apparatus lay at home with the working classes in the factories) rather than obsessing only over the troops at the front.[108] Appeals to 'khaki' were thus largely condemned as attempts to bypass the rationality of voters and present the patriotic exercise of the franchise as an act of duty above a considered operation.

Overall, while this 'sane Imperialism' certainly represented a determined attempt to challenge the resolutely imperial and militaristic Unionist brand of patriotism, its proponents were gloomily aware that they were fighting an uphill battle. Their appeals were as complex as their opponents' were simplistic, and their definition of an anti-imperial patriotism was as counter-intuitive as their opponents' imperial patriotism was intuitive. Unionists could simply point at the Union Jack to make their argument, while the Liberal rebuttal required lengthy exposition. Indeed, the intense Liberal defensiveness over their patriotic credentials perhaps revealed an underlying pessimism in the

[103] For further examples from Liberal speakers, see Readman, 'The Liberal Party and Patriotism', pp.272-3.

[104] *Lynn News*, 29 Sept, 26 Jun 1900.

[105] *The Times*, 27 Sept 1900.

[106] Readman, 'The Liberal Party and Patriotism', pp.280-2.

[107] *Lynn News*, 26 Jun 1900. See also *Suffolk Chronicle*, 21 Sept 1900, Stevenson (Eye), and *East Anglian Daily Times*, 26 Sept 1900, Buxton (Ipswich).

[108] *Lynn News*, 26 Jun 1900, Winfrey (South-West Norfolk), 26 Sept, Handel-Booth (Lynn), *East Anglian Daily Times*, 26 Sept 1900, Buxton (Ipswich).

electorate's political intelligence and a growing fear of the psychology of the herd.[109] White bemoaned that 'the salvation of the Tories is the short memory of voters...the curse of the military spirit which has been roused...means the neglect of all social questions' and a depressed Harcourt reflected that the electorate had conceived of the war like 'a savage tribe'.[110] Indeed, the radical organ of London working men's clubs, *Club Life*, reacted to the defeat by complaining that 'we are glad that manhood suffrage is not an acknowledged fact...many of the people...are too naturally ignorant to understand what an election really means...they have no time to read and think – they know nothing of the great problems of our time'.[111] This pessimism perhaps constituted an admission that – while both parties forwarded competing definitions of Imperialism and patriotism – that the Unionist versions were better adapted to the platform of mass politics.

* * *

This section has argued that the general election of 1895 was no more 'imperial' than its predecessors since 1880, and that the Imperialism of electoral politics in the 1890s was almost exclusively confined to the contest of 1900. To this end, this conclusion is a challenge to historians who have stressed the wider importance of Imperialism to the late nineteenth-century electoral platform. In 1900, the overwhelming emphasis on the war – and the fashioning of partisan electoral appeals around it – saw the previously contested ideas of Imperialism and patriotism develop a khaki flavour, and ultimately become inseparable. Unionists used military language, military candidate biographies, simple dichotomies of 'strength' and 'weakness' and 'friend' and 'enemy' to confound Liberal pleas for 'sane Imperialism' which stressed constructive criticism, diplomacy, the home front, and their party's past achievements.

The difficulty for the Liberals was not that their vision lacked clarity, but that it was poorly adapted to the mass platform. Their failure in articulating a punchy alternative Imperialism was reflected by the criticisms they attracted from their East Anglian opponents. Dalrymple (Ipswich) accused them of 'masquerading in the garb of imperialists'.[112] George White's Liberalism had become 'increasingly red, white and blue', Handel-Booth was 'a little off colour' in his new 'khaki suit' and Winfrey had transformed from the 'peaceful man' of 1895 to the 'warlike man who went in for the Union Jack'.[113] The Liberal defence of sane Imperialism – Winfrey's championing of the 'reserv(ation)

[109] Freeden, 'Liberal Passions', p.145. For the growing anxiety on the growth of non-rationality in British political culture at the turn of the century, see for example J. Hobson, *The Psychology of Jingoism* (London, 1901) and L. Hobhouse, *Democracy and Reaction* (London, 1904), pp.70-74.

[110] *Lynn News*, 16 Jun, 29 Sept 1900; *Eastern Daily Press*, 29 Sept 1900.

[111] *Club Life*, 6 Oct 1900, p.9. Cited in P. Readman, 'Patriotism and the General Election of 1900 in Britain' (MPhil, Cambridge, 1998), p.61.

[112] *East Anglian Daily Times*, 2 Oct 1900.

[113] *Lynn Advertiser*, 5 Oct 1900, Ffolkes (North-West Norfolk) and 28 Sept 1900, Gibson-Bowles (King's Lynn), and Hare (South-West Norfolk).

of the right to criticise', Horobin's defence of party divisions as 'essential in the creed of thinking men' – lacked the same punch and clarity in the wartime electoral arena, and were perhaps too subtle and counter-intuitive to gain wide applause for their patriotic credentials.[114] As T.E. Kebbel predicted as early as 1882, a mass franchise perhaps necessarily meant that simplistic and mono-dimensional caricatures were becoming the default currency of the language of electoral politics, and the Unionists – as the previous chapter demonstrated with the issue of Irish Home Rule in 1886 and 1892 – perhaps played the platform better than their opponents did in these years.[115] This takes the debate beyond the well-rehearsed argument that patriotism and Imperialism were contested discourses, by suggesting, in 1900 at least, that the Conservatives won the contest by making patriotism seem indistinguishable from a simple, and distinctly Unionist, articulation of Imperialism. Green's almost casual reference to the Unionists' 'patriotic-imperial card' is perhaps an unconscious testimony to that success.

One deeper manifestation of the triumph of Unionist Imperialism in 1900 was the dramatic growth in the language of Britishness. Appendix 4.5 shows that the average mentions of 'British' relative to 'English' in East Anglia in 1895 was 12-110 (Conservatives) and 4-65 (Liberals), with similar scores in the four prior elections. By 1900, these respective ratios transformed to 83-117 for the Unionists and 44-51 for the Liberals, with still more drastic changes on the national stage. Most significantly, this shift towards Britishness and away from Englishness was not just a temporary function of the war, but continued after 1900, as demonstrated by Figure 4.7 below:

Lemma	1880-1895	1900-1910
British (East Anglia)	17	57
English (East Anglia)	105	96
British (National Speakers)	29	49
English (National Speakers)	96	27

Figure 4.7: The Language of Britishness and Englishness, 1880-1910.

Scores are for both parties combined, and are averaged between the 4-5 elections in each group.

Figure 4.7 shows that in the five Victorian elections, 'English' enjoyed leads over 'British' of 88 in East Anglia and 67 on the national stage. However, in the four contests in the 1900s, this lead falls to 39 in East Anglia, and reverses to a deficit of 22 nationally. This finding arguably serves to magnify the importance of 1900 as a linguistic turning point in electoral politics: where a more imperial, kingdom-centric articulation of national identity increasingly challenged the old. It also represents a counter to the argument of Lynch that the war and Imperialism were presented to rural electors in 1900 primarily in terms of their impact on village communities.[116] Rather, it seems clear that both were instead

[114] *Lynn News*, 26 Jun 1900, (Winfrey); *Bury Free Press*, 8 Sept 1900 (Horobin).

[115] T. Kebbel, 'The Spirit of Party', *The Nineteenth Century*, vol. XI, No.61, (March 1882), p.386.

[116] Lynch, *Liberal Party*, p.157.

articulated (in the main) in unapologetically national terms. More broadly, it might be a step too far to contend, as Cunningham does, that the Conservatives failed to find a language that was both English and imperial, but these figures perhaps suggest that Englishness and Imperialism, while very far from mutually exclusive notions, were not as complementary as they once were, and the 1900 election result very much represented a triumph for a distinctly 'British' as well as English Unionism. More generally, these figures (and Appendix 4.5) perhaps serve to reaffirm the arguments of historians such as Ward and Colley on the instability and fluidity of the language of Britishness, and perhaps further suggest that the term was particularly flexible when placed in the hands of politicians fighting elections.[117]

V

Liberal Faddism

The Liberal Party's preoccupation with 'faddism' is one of the standard explanations for its unhappy political experience during the 1890s. According to a number of historians, Liberals gave disproportionate prominence to the wishes of various militant interest groups nursing their own special grievances and pet projects.[118] The reliance on the Newcastle Programme – the only banner broad enough to accommodate these multifarious concerns – is seen as a logical consequence of the party's confusion and division. However, these historians have perhaps been too quick to assume that the favourite targets of the Liberal faddists – the beer barrel, Church of England monopoly, and jingoism – were attacked exclusively on the grounds of morality and an over-active Nonconformist conscience. While there is undoubtedly a large element of truth in this view, it has stifled debate on whether there was any coherent political vision which brought together the faddists.[119] This section will suggest that the principle that united the multifarious concerns was, at root, an attack on irrationality and uncontrolled passions in politics. The inebriation caused by drink, the unthinking duty demanded by the psychology of jingoism, and an unquestioning servitude to the established Church caused the electorate, in various ways, to become intoxicated. These emotions – as the Liberal thinker J.M. Robertson argued – could 'blind people to the truth' and thus prevent them from realising their rationality and voting Liberal: the self-styled party of rationality.[120]

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[117] P. Ward, *Britishness since 1870* (London, 2004), pp.1-13; L. Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1837* (Reading, 2005), pp. 364-75.

[118] Hamer, *Politics of Electoral Pressure*, pp.1-8; Blewett, *Peers*, pp.19-21; Lawrence, *Speaking for the People*, p.194; Sykes, *Rise and Fall*, pp.135-37; Marsh, D*iscipline*, pp.245-46; Shannon, *The Age of Salisbury*, pp.406-21; Rhodes-James, *Rosebery*, p.384; Cassidy, 'Temperance and the 1895 General Election', pp.99-100.

[119] An exception is Paul Readman's suggestion that the Liberal avocations of Disestablishment and temperance in 1895 stemmed principally from an emerging interest in local democratic self-determination in the wake of the landmark Parish Councils Act of 1894. However, this is only a point made in passing on one page. See Readman, 'The Election of 1895', p.472.

[120] J. Robertson, *The Meaning of Liberalism*, (London, 1912), p.25, 29; Freeden, 'Liberal Passions', pp.142-3.

The idea that the Liberals saw their appeal as anchored first and foremost in rationality is consistent with H.C.G. Matthew's suggestion that their speakers saw public meetings as mature forums of debate for the ventilation of ideas, rather than as partisan platforms from which to enflame political passions.[121] To a degree, this argument is supported by the East Anglian corpus. Appendix 4.6 shows a taxonomy of eleven lemmas which arguably correlate with the delivery of a rational political message such as 'reason', 'intelligence', 'idea', and 'debate'. Conversely, Appendix 4.7 shows scores for three lemmas which might be associated with appeals to the irrational: to pride, honour, and love. The election-by-election aggregate readings for these appendices are shown as Figures 4.8 and 4.9 below:

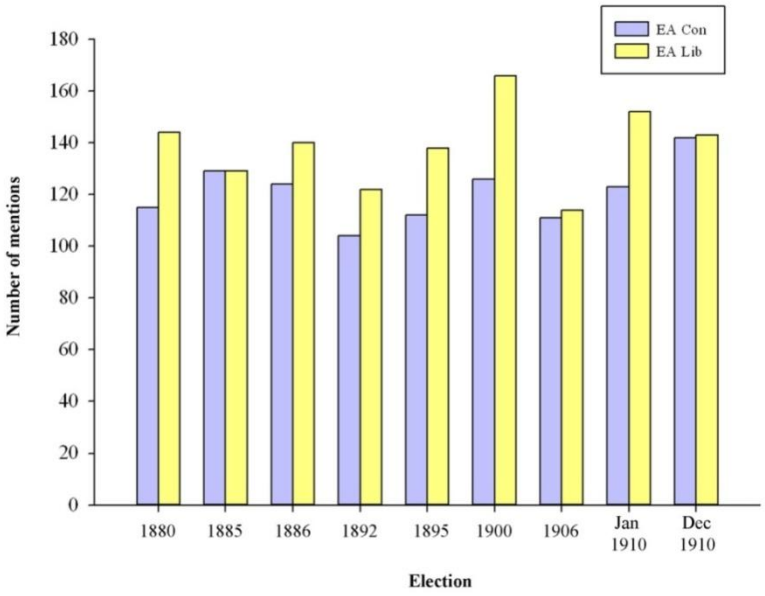

Figure 4.8: The Vocabulary of Reason

See Appendix 4.6.

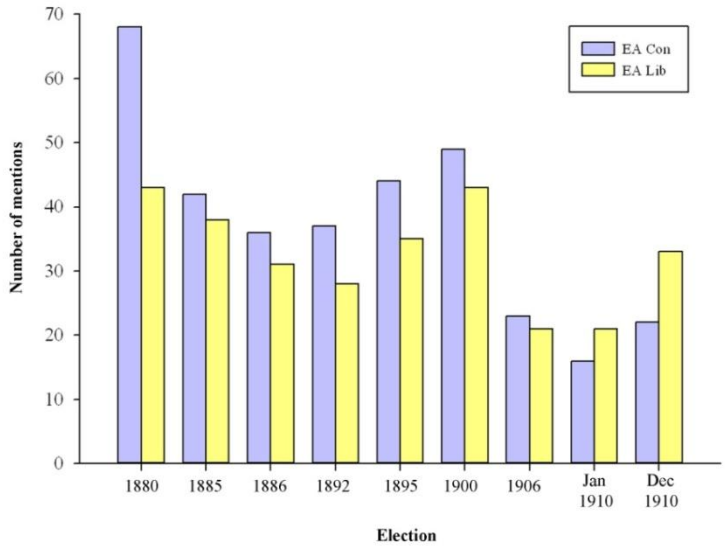

Figure 4.8: The Vocabulary of Passion

See Appendix 4.7.

[121] Matthew, 'Rhetoric and Politics', pp.51-2.

On rational vocabulary (Figure 4.7) the Liberals outscore the Conservatives in each election, with a lead of around 20% throughout the 1890s when faddism was most dominant. While noteworthy, the leads are small and not self-evidently significant. However, when paired with the taxonomy focussing on pride, honour, and love (Figure 4.8), Liberals trail the Conservatives in each election until 1910, and by 20% deficit in the 1890s. Admittedly, because this kind of language does not really contain reliable keywords (and is thus difficult to taxonomize) it would be a mistake to lean on these readings very heavily. However, they do cautiously suggest – in the 1890s especially – that East Anglian Liberal speakers may have prioritised a direct appeal to reason more highly than their opponents did.

We can gain more, however, from, an examination of the targets of the faddist's attack. The previous section demonstrated the intellectual basis for the Liberal criticism of the war and the khaki fever of 1900, or what the North-West Norfolk candidate White called 'the curse of the military spirit'.[122] This section will develop this further with parallel analyses of two other dragons that the faddists tried to slay in the 1890s: the beer barrel and Church of England privilege.

The brewing trade had long been considered an enemy of Liberalism. The monopoly it enjoyed (especially through the 'tied' system where brewers owned public houses) supposedly kept the working classes dependent on an intoxicating substance which reduced their morality and intelligence and trapped them in poverty.[123] Many Liberal intellectuals of the late 1890s – including Seebohm Rowntree, Arthur Sherwell, and the Webbs – regarded Sunday closure and other prohibitive temperance reforms *as* social reforms, because they contended that measures of housing, employment, or alleviation of poverty would have little impact if the poor remained shackled to the bottle.[124] Under the influence of what Foster (Lowestoft) called the 'fanatical teetotal members like Harcourt' the Liberals had already tried unsuccessfully to pass a Local Option bill in 1892, which would have enabled ratepayers to close local public houses on a two-thirds majority, or enforce Sunday closing on a simple plurality.[125] Local Option had been a minor election issue in 1892, but the agitation reached its height by 1895: its prominence (see Appendix 4.8) increased by a factor of five locally and nationally.[126] In East Anglia, 'Beer' jumped from 12 to 76 aggregate mentions, 'temperance' from 9 to 16, and 'Public House' from 14 to 53. Interestingly, the issue was still far from forgotten in 1900 where – despite the predominance of the war – the aggregate remained at 116: still more than double that of

[122] *Lynn News*, 29 Sept 1900.

[123] The effects of drink on the working classes came into sharp political focus as early as the 1830s, with a renewal of interest in the 1870s. See Greenaway, *Drink*, pp.7-8; J. Kidd, 'Temperance and its Boundaries', *Contemporary Review*, no.34 (Jan 1879); C. Graham, 'Beer and the Temperance Problem', *Contemporary Review*, no.30 (Jun 1877).

[124] A. Briggs, *Social Thought and Social Action. A study of the Work of Seebohm Rowntree, 1871-1954* (1961), p.30; A. Sherwell, *Life in West London, a Study and a Contrast* (1897). See also Lawrence, *Speaking for the People*, p.219, and Greenaway, *Drink*, pp.56-57.

[125] Cassidy, 'Temperance and the 1895 General Election, p.100; *Norfolk Argus*, 13 Jul 1895.

[126] The drink issue's visibility increased in East Anglia from a bi-partisan aggregate score (for all keywords) of 50 in 1892, to 246 in 1895. On the national stage, the equivalent scores were 30 for 1892, and 159 for 1895. See Appendix 4.8.

1892. While more of this increase was due to the Liberals – who mentioned the drink issue consistently more often – their lead was not a large one, suggesting that Unionists opposed their attacks doggedly.

There was certainly little love lost between the Liberals and the brewing trade in 1895. The president of the Norwich Liberal Association described it as 'the most gigantic and selfish monopoly that ever was found to exist in any civilised state in the world' and equalled his party's battle against it to 'the American fight against slavery'.[127] T.H. Dolbey (South-Norfolk) repeated Rosebery's argument that 'if you don't control the liquor traffic it will control you' and Verney (Norwich) declared that the 'worst public houses were a curse on the community'.[128] More tellingly, Liberals were quick to associate beer with Unionist electoral success. Speakers in Yarmouth and Norwich claimed the Tories would 'fill the electors with beer' and 'place publicans in front of them, publicans behind them, and publicans in the midst of them'.[129] Defeat at Ipswich in 1892 was put down to 'widespread drunkenness' and Harcourt was supposedly beaten at Derby by 'beer, and beer alone'.[130] In Ipswich, the Brewers' Association was considered so partisan that the Liberal candidates drew cheers from a meeting when they proudly announced that the Association had declared their answers to a questionnaire on licensing policy 'very unsatisfactory'.[131] If the Liberal attack on drunkenness was solely based on morality, it seems hard to imagine that they would have been so preoccupied with the partisan electoral impact of the beer barrel. Indeed, it was similarly no coincidence that John Burns complained of the 'mania for sport and gambling which directed the minds of working men from social and political ideals' in the wake of the party's depressing loss in 1900.[132] Rather, it seemed that intoxication offered an explanation for Liberal defeats as aberrations rather than as the genuine and considered verdicts of rational consistency electorates.

That the beer barrel became an important election issue was also, as Lawrence has demonstrated, because the Conservatives defended it so robustly.[133] Speakers championed a man's right to a quiet pint, unmolested by zealous hypocritical middle-class temperance reformers who wanted to 'annihilate the drink traffic' and 'take away the poor man's beer' while they sipped wine and champagne from their cellars on the Sabbath.[134] The extent to which Unionists were, as Everett

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[127] *Eastern Evening News,* 16 Jul 1895.

[128] *Diss Express,* 12 Jul 1895; *Eastern Evening News,* 16 Jul 1895.

[129] *Diss Express,* 5 Jul 1895, Lee (Yarmouth); *East Anglian Daily Times,* 4 Jul 1895, Goddard (Ipswich).

[130] *East Anglian Daily Times,* 4 Jul 1895; *Eastern Evening News,* 16 Jul 1895. The analysis of Harcourt's defeat was shared by the Liberal *Derby Daily Telegraph*, which described Local Option as 'our chief drawback'. See Cassidy, 'Temperence and the 1895 General Election', pp.108-9.

[131] *Suffolk Chronicle,* 3 Jul 1895

[132] *Clarion*, 3 Nov 1900, p.353. Cited in Readman, 'Patriotism and the General Election of 1900 in Britain', p.59.

[133] Lawrence, 'Urban Toryism', pp.633-42.

[134] *Suffolk Chronicle,* 6 Jul 1895, Pretyman (Woodbridge); *Eastern Evening News,* 18 Mar 1895, Rider-Haggard (East-Norfolk). See also Election Address of Bullard and Hoare (Norwich, 1895), *National Liberal Club Collection*, pt.1, 1895 section; *Norfolk Argus,* 6 Oct 1900, Priorleau (East-Norfolk).

(Woodbridge) put it, 'entrenched behind the beer barrel', was demonstrated by the colourful nature of some of their posters, which included such slogans as 'A Full Pint, vote for Tighe, a Pure Pint, vote for Tighe' at North-West Norfolk and 'Veto Champion Chucked!' and 'Harcourt kicked out!' at Ipswich.[135] Bullard, the Norwich brewer, complained humorously that it was hardly his fault if tenant publicans wanted to stay in his pubs, or that working men visited them so often, and Lord Elcho, when passed a dirty black bottle of beer as a 'gift' from a labourer at an Ipswich meeting felt obliged to 'take a dubious pull' at it to satisfy the crowd.[136] If anything, these platform appeals and antics based on a common love of beer enabled wealthy men like Bullard, Elcho, and Tighe to build rapport with audiences of working men and agricultural labourers. This had little to do with encouraging drunkenness, and rather more to do with developing an image of what J.H.S Lloyd's 1905 advisory manual called the 'popular candidate', or what Graham Wallas described as 'the kind of man we want'.[137] For Wallas, such behaviour represented 'contrivances by which...[the] immediate emotion of personal affection may be set up'.[138] In this respect, the Conservatives undoubtedly used the image of the beer barrel skilfully.

The second target of the faddists in the 1890s was the monopoly enjoyed by the established Church, which is reflected in the high emphasis given to religion by Liberal speakers in 1892 and 1895 (see Appendix 4.3). For Liberals, the Church had been forcibly built-up and maintained at the expense of the people through taxation and tithe, and Disestablishment and Disendowment was a common aspiration amongst candidates, even as early as 1885.[139] Welsh Disestablishment in 1895 was, for Wilson (Mid-Norfolk) merely 'the thin end of the wedge'[140]. Church of England voluntary schools were also the disproportionate beneficiaries of educational grants distributed by the 1895-1900 Government, leaving many dissenters with no local board school to send their children to, a situation which a North-West Norfolk clergyman described as 'not only unjust but immoral...it made young people hypocrites…the schools of England ought to be the schools of the people and not of the churches'.[141] The rational mind – as J.M. Robertson argued – was not innate, but required training to perfect,[142] and failure to provide a balanced schooling or to entertain multiple readings of Christianity effectively trapped people into unthinking Anglicanism. Terrell (Norwich) asked whether 'the Church was afraid of [the] competition…to be put upon the same level as these people [Nonconformists]…because of the loaves and the fishes?'. This, and the bias in education, caused people to become 'saturated in Toryism'.[143] Because Liberals widely saw the Church of England as

[135] *East Anglian Daily Times,* 3 Oct 1900; *Liberal Magazine,* August 1895; *East Anglian Daily Times,* 16 Jul 1895.

[136] *Eastern Evening News,* 16 Jul 1895; *East Anglian Daily Times,* 15 Jul 1895.

[137] J. Lloyd, *Elections and How to Fight Them* (London, 1905), pp.2-3, 36-46, 52-53; Wallas, *Human Nature,* p.31.

[138] Wallas, *Human Nature,* p.30.

[139] See Chapter Two, p.75.

[140] *Lynn Advertiser,* 13 Apr 1895.

[141] *Lynn News,* 29 Sept 1900. See Lynch, *Liberal Party,* pp.168-72.

[142] Robertson, *The Meaning of Liberalism,* pp.25-30.

[143] *Norfolk Chronicle,* 6 Jul 1895.

'The Tory party at prayer', it could be said that these attacks also had as much to do with party partisanship as they did morality.

Faddism was also easy to attack. The most obvious argument used by Unionists was that restrictions on public house and Church were illiberal: a Primrose-league recommended pamphlet of 1894 condemned it as 'grandmotherly government…tying you…to her apron strings and not letting you move a finger' and the *London Evening News* bemoaned the 'moral zealots (who)… would deprive us of any amusement more exciting than a prayer meeting and any drink more exhilarating than London water'.[144] The second argument was that an obsession with subsidiary issues like Local Option showed the Liberals to be 'powerless to attend to great measures' (Dalrymple) as they were compelled to listen to 'the smallest sections of their own supporters [to]...humour various crotchetiers and log-rollers' (Foster).[145] This made the Liberals parochial: it gave them, in the words of a Cambridgeshire speaker 'the instincts of a parish vestry clerk' and meant, as Gibson-Bowles dramatically described, that 'their captain would, when the vessel had just come through a terrible storm, at the very moment [it] required the attention of every one of the crew…would turn up the hands to polish the brasswork'.[146] The absence of a coherent appeal – Gibson-Bowles described them as 'leaders, followers, carpet-bag candidates, parish politicians, scallywags and the merest guttersnipes that ever mouthed politics' – also prevented them from pursuing any meaningful national policies.[147] Perhaps the most the damning condemnation came from the recently founded Labour Party of Ipswich, which supported the Conservatives in 1895 because the Liberals would 'not go in for social legislation' because they perpetually 'dabbled' with fringe issues like Welsh Disestablishment.[148] Faddism – like 'sane Imperialism' – suffered from being difficult to coherently explain, but easy to caricature.

That the Liberals continued to be preoccupied by these supposedly fringe issues even in 1900 suggests that they *did* regard them as electorally important, even if the centre of the campaign was located elsewhere. This was not so much because they believed that attacks on drink, jingoism, or Church privilege would win votes directly, but because these evils sabotaged the natural propensity of the electorate to vote Liberal. This long-held assumption (Wallas called it 'the intellectualist fallacy') dictated that the majority – if they realised their rational self-interest – would naturally support the progressive party.[149] As a speaker at Lynn argued: 'No workingman, realising what the Liberals had

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[144] H. Constable, *Some hints for political Leaflets Addressed to the Agricultural Labourer* (1894). This was recommended in the *Primrose League Gazette* for Conservative activists. *London Evening News,* 5 Jul 1892 (cited in Windscheffel, *Popular Conservatism,* p.75).

[145] *East Anglian Daily Times,* 5 Jul 1895; *Norfolk Argus,* 13 Jul 1895.

[146] *Lynn Advertiser,* 28 Sept 1900; *Cambridge Daily News,* 1 Oct 1900.

[147] *Lynn Advertiser,* 28 Sept 1900.

[148] *Ipswich Journal,* 7 Feb 1895.

[149] Wallas, *Human Nature,* pp.22-29. Wallas traced the assumption that self interest was at the root of all behaviour to Lord Macaulay's influential whiggish writings in the early years of the nineteenth century. Although the existence of 'impulses' had been well discussed from the 1850s, Wallas notes that Macaulay's 'intellectualist fallacy' still often persisted in the area of democratic participatory politics into the 1900s.

done for him, would stand away from the mast of Liberalism'.[150] The Conservative platform, as James Bryce described, was 'purely negative'.[151] For Everett, the Tories 'legislated for the classes, not the masses' and (for Winfrey) 'gave slops and doles to their particular friends…the great mass of the people received no benefit'.[152] The Liberals therefore often seemed to believe that their opponents would only win if they bypassed the electorate's rational faculties with some kind of jingoistic, spiritual, or physical intoxication. The same logic also lay behind criticisms of the decision to fight the 1900 election on the old register, the holding of the 1892 and 1895 contests at harvest time when labourers were out in the fields, and fancy franchises (especially outvoters) of all kinds. In other words, it was only by subverting or stifling the will of the people that Conservatism could ever prevail.

The perceived irrationality of Conservatism was embodied by their popular characterisation as 'the stupid party' by their opponents. Terrell argued in 1895 that 'if it were not for ignorance workingmen would not be persuaded to join the Tory party...ignorance is the force we have to fight against and defeat'.[153] This ignorance was sustained by the Conservative mission to 'always obstruct the wheels of progress…to train up scores of… men and women who would be saturated with Toryism'.[154] The supposed absence of intellectual content was also at the core of enduring sarcastic attacks on East Anglian Conservative electioneering efforts. Tory fêtes, performances, and fireworks which were described as 'a circus for the electors' and 'threepenny menageries' at which 'the political fireworks...would occupy a back place'.[155] The more colourful Unionist candidates who relied on humour or pantomime were also the subject of ridicule: Gibson-Bowles of King's Lynn particularly offended Liberals with his comedic attempts to impersonate his carpet-bagger opponents' London accents on the platform, the use of his ship festooned with party decorations, his championing of King's Lynn Rovers football team, and his unexpected intrusions (apparently without knocking) into people's houses to befriend them.[156]

But these attacks on the 'irrational' aspects of Conservative appeal perhaps showcased the underlying fear amongst Liberals that such appeals could be electorally effective. Wallas described the political power of 'acts…which aim at producing an exalted emotional effect among ordinary slow-witted people…[and] produce spontaneous laughter'.[157] Conservatism – as the contemporary

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[150] *Lynn News*, 13 Jul 1895, Miss. Veness (Lynn). See also *Suffolk Chronicle*, 13 Jul 1895, Soames (Ipswich): 'If the people were true to themselves and their liberty…they would break the shackles which now held their limbs…and free themselves once and for all', and *Lynn News*, 16 Jun 1895, White (North-West Norfolk): 'If they did vote in their own interests they would only be following the example of their masters'.

[151] Cited in Readman 'The 1895 Election' p.477. See this article for further examples of 'Tory negativity'.

[152] *Suffolk Chronicle*, 3 Oct 1900; *Lynn News*, 26 Jun 1900.

[153] *Norfolk Chronicle*, 6 Jul 1895.

[154] *Bury Free Press* 8 Sept 1900, Councillor Hooper (Stowmarket). For similar criticisms, see *Diss Express* 5 Jul 1885, (Councillor Nudd); *Eastern Evening News*, 3 Jul 1895 (G. Lee); *Lynn News*, 13 Jul 1895 (Cozens-Hardy, Miss Veness).

[155] *Diss Express* 5 Jul 1895, (G. Lee); *Star of the East*, 17 Jun 1892 (Soames).

[156] *Lynn Advertiser*, 13 and 24 Jul 1895.

[157] Wallas, *Human Nature*, pp. 35-36.

commentator Kebbel argued – were perhaps more in tune with 'the power of…the romantic, picturesque, and venerable,…which speaks to the heart rather than to the head', and R.B. Haldane grudgingly admitted even in 1888 that, while the Liberals had cooler heads, that Conservatives better understood human instinct.[158] For Freeden, 'successful ideologies require powerful emotional symbols, or...a language which evokes strong sentiments, even passion'.[159] Perhaps Conservative speakers understood this better in these years, and it may be no coincidence that East Anglian speakers elicited 'laughter' from their audiences more often than did Liberals at each general election in the Victorian period (see Appendix 4.9). The successful harnessing of the power of political passion may be a major factor in explaining the particular success of colourful candidates like Gibson-Bowles and Bullard, and also working-class Conservative appeals more generally up until 1900. For Freeden, the Liberals did not conquer their fear of passion until the 1900s when influential thinkers such as J.S. Phillimore, J.A. Hobson, and Wallas himself championed its virtues from a progressive perspective.[160] It may be no coincidence that Liberals in the Campbell-Bannerman era – as Readman suggests – also rediscovered their patriotic credentials, and relinquished many parts of the faddism of the 1890s.[161] They also – as Trentmann demonstrates – discovered in Free Trade a cause which was conducive to anecdotes, pantomimes, and simple metaphors like the 'big and the little loaf'.[162] Indeed, it also may be no coincidence that Edwardian East Anglian Liberal speakers finally pulled ahead (in all three contests) in eliciting both cheering and laughter (see Appendix 4.9).

The results of both 1895 and 1900 left many Liberals extremely pessimistic about the intelligence of the electorate. In 1895, a Lynn Liberal concluded that 'there was often a great deal of ignorance…I felt it was not the opinion of an intelligent electorate' and in 1900 White concluded that 'the salvation of the Tories is the short memory of voters…the country would forget in a little while the glamour that surrounded the war and begin to think, in sober judgement, of other things'.[163] It may have been, as the *Suffolk Chronicle* described in 1895 'a battle of brains against beer', but it seemed beer had emerged victorious, and in 1900 the electorate had treated the war issue with the civic consciousness of 'a howling, brutalised savage'.[164] Speaking in 1906, a Yarmouth Liberal solemnly recalled 'how five years ago the Tories waved the patriotic flag, beat the imperialist drum, and sounded their trumpets...the electors were *hypnotised* into sending the late government into power' (emphasis added).[165] Overall, the faddist attacks sprung from a belief that – for a democracy to function and for a progressive party to emerge victorious in it – the electors had to be open-minded, dispassionate, and sober. When anything obstructed rational choice the Liberals assumed their opponents benefited, and a

[158] Kebbel, 'Spirit of Party', p.386; R. Haldane, *The Liberal Creed* (1888), p.464, 472.

[159] Freeden, 'Liberal Passions', p.136.

[160] Freeden, 'Liberal Passions', pp.140-8.

[161] Readman, 'The Liberal Party and Patriotism', pp.300-301.

[162] F. Trentmann, *Free Trade Nation* (Oxford, 2008), ch.2.

[163] *Lynn News*, 13 Jul 1895, 16 Jun 1900.

[164] *Suffolk Chronicle*, 3 Aug 1895; *Justice*, 20 Oct 1900, p.1.

[165] *Yarmouth Mercury*, 13 Jan 1906.

desire to eliminate the deleterious influence of passions was arguably the chain that united the various omnibuses and pet projects. The preoccupation with faddism also revealed a final ironic truth: that the party which had done so much to bring about a democratic mass electorate, and which had assumed (along with its opponents) that it would be the inevitable beneficiary, had begun to lack faith in the wisdom of the new electors.

VI
Conclusion

This chapter has argued that our understanding of electoral politics in these years should be revised in two ways. The first is that imperial appeals only found widespread expression in the Victorian platform in the general election of 1900 as a direct result of the war, not in 1895, or in earlier contests (with the exception of 1886). Historians have exaggerated the extent to which the high-profile khaki election was representative of electoral politics in the late 1880s and 1890s in general, when it was, in fact, more of an aberration. That 1900 was a strikingly imperial election, dominated by the war, should also be recognised, and Price's influential thesis rejected. The second is that historians have become too preoccupied with idea that the languages of Imperialism or patriotism were contested, and could be shaped by different political actors to suit their ends. While this reading has undoubted merit, it should not be used to escape attributions of power and political advantage. In this respect, this chapter has argued that the Conservatives – through simple celebrations, use of the military, and through creating a binary language of 'friend' and 'traitor' – presented a more electorally powerful interpretation than the Liberals' more complex 'sane Imperialism'. Through doing so, they effectively made their articulation of Imperialism synonymous with patriotism. Liberals could – and did – contest this, but they were fighting an uphill battle, certainly until 1901 when the war started to turn sour.

The Liberal appeal was also over-complex when it came to the 'faddist' attacks on jingoism, Church privilege, and the drink issue. As well as an assault on the immorality of these perceived evils, this chapter has argued that the faddists' unifying principle was a desire to safeguard the rational elector from intoxicating passions. Unfortunately, such an appeal was hard to explain, and easy for Unionists to attack and caricature. And simple attacks and caricatures were perhaps now the default rhetorical currency of the modern political platform of 1895 and 1900, which was arguably anything but a mature forum for the ventilation of ideas, as Matthew suggests. Such an idealised platform might once have existed in the period prior to the 1883-85 reforms, but mass-enfranchisement had gradually transformed it, as Lawrence argues, into something that was altogether more populist and vulgar.[166] The Conservatives seemed to understand this better: their use of simple and dogmatic appeals, the military, and the language of battle, helped them win the definitional battle for patriotism in politics in 1900. Their attack on faddism was so effective because it exploited the passionate, the symbolic, and

[166] J. Lawrence, *Electing Our Masters: The Hustings in British Politics from Hogarth to Blair* (Oxford, 2009), pp.70-83.

the romantic. In this respect, Salisbury had proved his earlier predictions of the extinction of Conservatism in democratic politics to be misplaced: the party could not only survive, but flourish in a system where voting power was now vested in the principle of numbers above intelligence. The common contemporary Liberal put-down of the Tories as the 'stupid party' in many ways missed the point: their appeal might have seemed 'stupid' to high-minded intellectuals, but it was also eminently sensible politics.

CHAPTER 5

The Impact of the New Liberalism

The General Elections of 1906 and 1910

I

Electoral Politics 1906-1910- An Overview

By the spring of 1903, by-election results suggested that Balfour's Government would lose the next general election.[1] The South African War had dragged on until 1902, the Education Act had angered Nonconformists, unemployment was rising, and the Government seemed bereft of ideas. Beatrice Webb pronounced the Cabinet 'panic-stricken' and 'scared' by the recent defeats.[2] It was in this climate that Joseph Chamberlain launched his Tariff Reform crusade in May at Glasgow, and it seemed certain that a substantial part of his motivation was to reverse the Unionist malaise.[3] His proposals for a range of modest tariffs on imports went on to comprehensively split the party, and dominated Unionist politics for more than a decade. Although by-elections initially indicated a favourable response to Tariff Reform, the results turned sour by 1905.[4] By December of that year, Balfour had still not come out in support of Chamberlain or the Free Traders and, under immense pressure from the National Union and Birmingham to commit fully to Tariff Reform, he resigned from office. In a matter of weeks, Henry Campbell-Bannerman had dissolved Parliament, and the Liberals won a crushing majority of 128, with 399 seats on a 5.7% national swing. The Unionists were reduced to just 157 members: the modern party's worst ever result. Historians have disagreed as to how far this was a victory for traditional Liberal values, or whether the emerging philosophical influence of the 'New Liberalism' also played a part. However, there seems little doubt that the party's championing of Free Trade in the face of Chamberlain's programme dominated the campaign, and won considerable support. The *Manchester Guardian* was convinced: 'A candidate had only to be a Free-Trader to get

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[1] The average swing away from the Government in the four comparable contests from January-May 1903 shows a 10.1% average swing away from the Unionists. This poor trend is reflected by contemporary pessimism regarding the Unionists' chances: see for example H. Massingham, 'Persons and Politics', *Speaker*, 21 March 1903, pp. 612-14; J. Shirley, 'The Bye-elections and Liberal Prospects', *Westminster Review* (April 1903), pp. 376-82.

[2] N. and J. MacKenzie (eds.), *The Diary of Beatrice Webb* (London, 1986), vol 2, pp. 27 5-6.

[3] E. Green, 'Radical Conservatism: The Electoral Genesis of Tariff Reform', *Historical Journal* (1985), 667-92, 686-8; R. Jay, *Joseph Chamberlain: a Political Study* (Oxford, 1981), pp.301-2; D. Judd, *Radical Joe: a life of Joseph Chamberlain* (Cardiff, 1993), pp.241-2; J. Garvin and J. Amery, *The Life of Joseph Chamberlain* (London and New York, 1969), vol. XI, p.795; P. Marsh, *Joseph Chamberlain: Entrepreneur in Politics* (London, 1994), p.626.

[4] The thirteen comparable elections held after Chamberlain's Glasgow Speech and August 1904 showed the anti-Government swing dropping to just 4.4%. Chamberlain wrote that the results 'exceeded [his] most sanguine expectations'. See R. Rempel, *Unionists Divided: Arthur Balfour, Joseph Chamberlain and the Unionist Free Fooders* (Newton Abbot, 1972), p.73. In 1905, however, the average anti-Unionist swing returned to 8.4%.

in: whether he was known or unknown, semi-Unionist or thorough Home-Ruler, Protestant or Catholic, entertaining or dull. He had only to be a Protectionist to lose all chance of getting in, though he spoke with the tongues of angels'.[5]

In East Anglia, ten of the sixteen Unionist candidates endorsed Chamberlain's programme, with the remaining six siding with Balfour's noncommittal position.[6] The results for both Half and Whole-Hoggers alike were dire.[7] Propelled by an average regional swing of 7%, the Liberals gained nine seats, capturing every county division and all but two boroughs.[8] In Suffolk, Felix Cobbold took the second Ipswich seat, William Heaton-Armstrong gained Sudbury for the first time since 1885, Robert Lacey Everett regained Woodbridge, and G.A. Hardy and Edward Beauchamp captured Stowmarket and Lowestoft with swings of 10.7% of 17.3% respectively. In Norfolk, where the Liberals were already strong, Richard Winfrey's third attempt to carry the South-Western division succeeded, and in Norwich, Louis Tillett (Liberal) and George Roberts (East Anglia's first ever Labour candidate) gained both seats on a joint progressive ticket. In King's Lynn, the idiosyncratic sitting MP Thomas Gibson-Bowles ran as an independent Free Trader, splitting the Unionist vote and allowing the Liberal C.W. Bellairs to take the seat. The only remaining Conservatives in the region were Lord Francis Hervey in the stronghold of Bury, and Arthur Fell, who managed to hold the marginal Great Yarmouth against the prevailing swing. *The Bury Free Press* declared the result 'a free trade deluge' and hailed the 'constant and welling stream flowing through the constituencies which is sweeping away every vestige of the Protectionist and Retaliationist policy... [of] Messrs Chambelrain and Balfour'.[9]

The Liberal government went on to implement an ambitious programme of social reforms, which included Old Age Pensions, labour exchanges, poor law reform, and free school meals. This programme seemed – to some contemporaries and historians – to represent a shift towards social democracy, collectivism, and state intervention as advocated by New Liberal intellectuals such as T.H. Green, J.A. Hobson, L.T. Hobhouse, C.F. Masterman, and Graham Wallas.[10] The difficulty, of course, was paying for it, and on the 29th April 1909, Lloyd George delivered his famous 'People's Budget' which included the taxation and valuation of land, graduated contributions by income, and a super tax

[5] *Manchester Guardian*, 15 Jan 1906.

[6] See Appendix 5.1.

[7] This dissertation uses the standard contemporary definitions of 'Whole-Hogger' and 'Half-Hogger'. The former was a candidate who explicitly endorsed Chamberlain's full programme of tariffs. 'Half-Hogger' or 'Balfourite' refers to a candidate in 1906 who supported a general programme of tariff reform, but not Chamberlain's full scheme. A 'Free Fooder', meanwhile, was a candidate who rejected any tariff reform and advocated Free Trade. Generally these terms were only widely used in 1906, mainly because there were so few non Whole-Hogger Unionist candidates remaining by 1910.

[8] This swing figure excludes the atypical three-way contest in King's Lynn, where two Unionist candidates stood.

[9] *Bury Free Press*, 20 Jan 1906,

[10] P. Clarke, *Lancashire and the New Liberalism* (Cambridge, 1971), pp.398-99; I. Packer, 'The 1910 General Elections: Turning points in British Politics?', *Journal of Liberal History* (2010), p.20; 'Economic strategies and the New Liberalism', *Journal of Liberal History* (2007), p.23; A. Holmes, 'The development of the New Liberalism as a philosophy of transition', *Journal of Liberal History* (2007), p.25.

for annual earnings exceeding £5,000. The Unionists were appalled, and condemned the Budget as representing the worst kind of Socialism, with many condemning it as class warfare.[11] The House of Lords was most scathing: Lord Galway described it as 'fraught with grave risk and danger to the country', Lord Curzon as 'a Socialist experiment', and Lord Ashbourne as 'unwonted, abnormal, unclean'.[12] In December 1909, the Lords – voting almost entirely on party lines – dismissed the Budget by 350 votes to 75.[13] The Liberals had realised that rejection was likely, and were more than ready to take the Budget and the issue of the Lord's veto to the country and fight a 'peers versus people' election.[14] In the immediate aftermath of the Upper House's rejection, many leading Liberals believed their electoral cry would be irresistible: Lloyd George told the National Liberal Club that 'we have got them at last' and the *Daily News'* sensationalist headline 'Suicide of the House of Lords' was only slightly less hyperbolic than the *Daily Chronicle's* 'Revolution Begins'.[15] Indeed, Duncan Tanner has described the Budget as 'a superb tactical device.'[16] For their part, the Conservatives were still preoccupied by Tariff Reform. The scheme had now been fully adopted by Balfour and almost all Unionist candidates,[17] and according to E.H.H. Green, was widely seen as an alternative method of financing social reform without the 'Socialism' of the Budget.[18] Even as the first polling took place, both parties were confident that they would win.[19] As it transpired, neither did: the Unionists took 272 seats on a national swing of 4.7%, with the Liberals holding 274, remaining in power only through the support of the 40 Labour members and 82 Irish Nationalists. The turnout of 86.8% was the highest ever seen in a British general election.

Although the government was now able to pass the Budget, a second election was always likely when the Lords – predictably – refused to consent to their own emasculation through the proposed Parliament Act, which proposed to deprive them of their veto. In the resulting constitutional

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[11] Clarke, *Lancashire*, p.361; P. Lynch, *The Liberal Party in rural England 1885-1910: Radicalism and Community* (Oxford, 2003), p.197; N. Blewett, *The Peers, the Parties and the People: the General Elections of 1910* (Bristol, 1972), pp. 105-107, 128-9.

[12] Cited in Blewett, *Peers*, p.100.

[13] Blewett, *Peers*, pp.100-1.

[14] G. Searle, *The Liberal Party: Triumph and Disintegration, 1886-1929* (Basingstoke, 2001), p.86; Blewett, *Peers*, p.106; Packer, 'The 1910 Elections', p.8.

[15] *Daily News*, 1 Jan 1909; *Daily Chronicle*, 1 Jan 1909; Blewett, *Peers*, p.105.

[16] D. Tanner, *Political Change and the Labour Party, 1900-1918* (Cambridge, 1990), p.49. Charmley has a similarly favourable view of the 'Peers versus the People' cry. See J. Charmley, *A History of Conservative Politics, 1900-1996* (Basingstoke, 1996), p.39.

[17] A. Sykes, 'The Confederacy and the purge of the Unionist Free Traders , 1906-1910', *Historical Journal* (1975), p.345; L. Witherell, 'Political Cannibalism among Edwardian Conservatives: Henry Page Croft, the confederacy and the campaign for East Hertfordshire, 1906-10', *20th Century British History* (1997). For an account of the gradual adoption of Tariff Reform by the Conservative Party, see P. Fraser, 'Unionism and Tariff Reform: the crisis of 1906', *Historical Journal* (1962).

[18] E. Green, *The Crisis of Conservatism: the Politics, Economics and Ideology of British Conservatism, 1880-1914* (1994), pp.191-3, 206, 244.

[19] Blewett, *Peers*, p.131.

deadlock – made more difficult by the death of the King in May – both parties agreed to a conference to settle the matter without the need for a second election. However, their respective positions were now entirely polarised, and the dialogue broke down in November. The resulting general election campaign was – according to the election address analysis of Neal Blewett – conduced on almost identical lines to the January contest, with the House of Lords and Tariff Reform dominating.[20] The only real change seemed to be that Ireland once again became important, owing to the Liberal Government's willingness to resurrect Home Rule to appease John Redmond, and that the Unionists floated the idea of a referendum to resolve the House of Lords issue.[21] Under pressure from the Liberals and the press, Balfour also confirmed in the middle of the campaign that he was willing to submit Tariff Reform to a national vote: a move which, according to Green, Clarke, and Blewett, spectacularly backfired.[22] As it transpired, the result simply reconfirmed the January verdict, and both parties finished with 272 members each. There was a minuscule 0.5% swing to the Liberals and although both sides gained almost two dozen seats, these were cancelled out by losses elsewhere. The crisis had scarcely been resolved: *The Times* sarcastically called the result 'the Government's "Victory"' and asked 'what has he [Asquith] got? Just what he had before' while the *Penny Illustrated*, more evenly, judged that 'the leaders of both parties are not at all pleased with the result of the election...the country is not madly in love with the proposals of either side'.[23]

The East Anglian swings in both 1910 elections mirrored the national picture: 4.7% to the Unionists in January, and 0.6% away from them in December. Unlike in 1906, the party presented a united front on Tariff Reform in both contests, with each and every candidate explicitly endorsing the full programme.[24] In January, the overall results were unsurprisingly a big improvement from the debacle of 1906. This was particularly the case in rural Suffolk, where the party regained four county divisions, with H.S. Foster returning from retirement to capture Lowestoft, F.B.H. Goldsmith and R.F. Peel taking Stowmarket and Woodbridge respectively, and W.E.C. Quilter succeeding his father, who had been defeated in 1906, as the new member for Sudbury. In Norfolk, the Conservatives attained some impressive swings (such as N.P. Jodrell's 10% in the North-Western constituency) but most of the county seats had become so safe for the Liberals that they managed only one gain in the Mid division through the Liberal Unionist William Boyle, a strong candidate who had gradually been eating into the Liberal majority, even achieving a swing in 1906. In the boroughs, the picture was unchanged, although Gibson-Bowles was again returned for King's Lynn, only this time as a Liberal. Despite the gains, the Unionist haul of seven out of eighteen seats was still their third worst result in East Anglia in the 1880-1910 period. In the regional press, both sides claimed victory. On the last day

[20] Blewett, *Peers*, p.317, 326.

[21] For the importance of Irish Home Rule in 1910 (especially in December), see D. Jackson, *Popular Opposition to Irish Home Rule in Edwardian Britain* (Liverpool, 2009).

[22] Clarke, *Lancashire*, p.382; Green, *Crisis*, pp.274-6; Blewett, *Peers*, pp.187-94.

[23] *The Times*, 17 Dec 1910; *The Penny Illustrated Paper*, 17 Dec 1910.

[24] See Appendix 5.1.

of returns, the Liberal *Lynn News* boasted that the 'the capture of a Tory seat at Wick wound up the campaign in brilliant style for the Liberals...it practically fixed the Liberal majority at 124' [sic].[25] Meanwhile, Lynn's main Unionist organ instead declared that 'the figures and all the circumstances spell coming disaster for the Liberals...they reached their high water-mark four years ago'.[26]

In December, the Unionists lost ground marginally in East Anglia in all but three divisions. All the sitting East Anglian members held their seats except for Gibson-Bowles in King's Lynn, who was defeated by the Conservative Holcombe Ingleby on a 5.7% swing after a colourful contest where Ingleby was accused of bribing several hundred voters with 'gifts' of wild rabbits and ducks.[27] However, the region spoke with no more clarity than the nation as a whole. The *Lynn Advertiser* remarked dryly that 'the second general election of 1910 began on December 3rd and will probably be known to history as "the general re-election"'.[28]

II

Introduction

The historiography of Edwardian politics is vast, and the elections of 1906 and 1910 are well-served. Perhaps understandably – given the focus in all three contests on great national questions such as Tariff Reform, the People's Budget, and the Lord's veto – the balance of the historiography is weighted in favour of electoral politics to a greater extent than for either of the previous two decades. Even more general works such as Green's *Crisis of Conservatism*, Tanner's *Political Change and the Labour Party*, Trentmann's *Free Trade Nation*, and Searle's *Liberal Party: Triumph and Disintegration* pay close attention to the contents of campaigns. There are also three books specifically dedicated to the elections: A.K. Russell's study of 1906, Neal Blewett's weighty monograph on the elections of 1910, and Peter Clarke's highly-influential *Lancashire and the New Liberalism*, which covers all three contests. Though they date from the early 1970s, each contains a healthy engagement with electoral language, and Russell and Blewett also provide quantitative election address analyses similar to Readman's for 1895 and 1900.[29] Additionally, these contests are also served by the three local studies of Lynch, Windscheffel, and Lawrence which have featured throughout this thesis.[30] Finally, there are

[25] *Lynn News*, 22 Jan 1910. The projected 'Liberal majority of 124' included all the Labour and Nationalist members.

[26] *Lynn Advertiser*, 28 Jan 1910.

[27] *The Times*, 7 Aug 1926 (Obituary).

[28] *Lynn Advertiser*, 30 Dec 1910.

[29] A. Russell, *Liberal Landslide: the General Election of 1906* (Newton Abbot, 1973), p.79, 83; Blewett, *Peers*, pp.317-8, 326. For a review and critique of the election address methodology, see Chapter Four above, pp.130-2.

[30] Lynch, *Liberal Party*, pp. 179-218; A. Windscheffel, *Popular Conservatism in imperial London, 1868-1906* (2007), pp.196-206; J. Lawrence, *Speaking for the People: Party, Language, and Popular Politics in England, 1867-1914* (Cambridge, 1998), pp. 222-6, 246-9.

important articles by Thackeray, Doyle, Bernstein, and Dawson on Edwardian electoral politics which also discuss language.[31]

Two questions in particular have fascinated historians of this period, and this chapter will make contributions to both debates. The first is how far these elections were victories for the 'New Liberalism', and by extension, whether the Liberals had managed to forge a popular appeal which would cement the loyalties of working class voters and see off the increasing challenge of Labour. This leads into the still larger debate of whether the upheaval of the Great War – and the Liberal split of 1916 – effectively doomed a still healthy party, or whether it simply hastened an inexorable journey to the political gallows which began some years before 1914, as famously argued in Dangerfield's *Strange Death of Liberal England*.[32] Historical opinion is still very much divided on both questions, and falls roughly under four heads. The first is most associated with Peter Clarke, and stresses a discernible and positive impact of the New Liberalism, both in terms of a real commitment to social reform (especially under Asquith from 1908) and its dynamic and ultimately successful articulation to voters, particularly the working classes.[33] The second is proposed by historians who see the Edwardian victories as representing more of a triumph for the older form of radical Liberalism which formed the staple of the party's appeal from 1886, and who find little evidence of any new formula.[34] The third position lies somewhere in-between, and argues that the Liberals developed a new form of populist language – through condemning the immorality of Chinese Labour in 1906, attacking the Lords in 1910, and developing an alternative articulation of patriotism – but that the extent of their conversion remains open to question.[35] Finally, there are the (almost exclusively older) sociological works which view the Liberal Party as a largely exhausted and outdated force, and thus as an inadequate representative for an increasingly unionised, materially-aware working population which was

[31] D. Thackeray, 'Rethinking the Edwardian Crisis of Conservatism', *Historical Journal* (2011); B. Doyle, 'Urban Liberalism and the "lost generation": politics and middle class culture in Norwich, 1900-1935', *Historical Journal*, (1995); G. Bernstein, 'Liberalism and the Progressive Alliance in the constituencies, 1900-1914: three case studies', *Historical Journal* (1983); Michael Dawson, 'Liberalism in Devon and Cornwall, 1910-1931: "the old-time religion"', *Historical Journal*, (1995).

[32] G. Dangerfield, *The Strange Death of Liberal England* (London, 1936).

[33] Clarke, *Lancashire*, esp. pp.356-7, 398-99; Russell, *Liberal Landslide*, pp.65-66, 71-72, 200; Packer 'Economic Strategies', p.23; M. Pugh, 'Liberals in 1906: Flourishing or Doomed? The Optimistic View', *Journal of Liberal History* (2007), p.56; R. Lewis, 'The Welsh radical tradition and the ideal of a democratic popular culture', in E. Biagini, (ed.), *Citizenship and Community: Liberals, Radicals and Collective Identities in the British Isles, 1865-1931* (Cambridge, 1996), p.340.

[34] Searle, *Triumph*, pp.79, 84-5, 108-109 ; Lynch, *Liberal Party*, pp.198-9; Dawson, 'Old Time Religion', p.432; J. Belchem, *Class, party and the political system in Britain, 1867-1914* (Oxford, 1990), pp. 45-6, 49; K. Morgan, 'The New Liberalism and the Challenge of Labour: The Welsh Experience, 1885-1929' and M. Bentley, 'The Liberal Response to Socialism', in K. Brown (ed.) *Essays in Anti-labour History* (Exeter, 1974), pp. 170, 180-1 and pp. 43-4 respectively; M. Bentley, *The Climax of Liberal Politics* (Newcastle, 1987), pp.109-120; D. Dutton, 'Liberals in 1906: Flourishing or Doomed? The Pessimistic View', *Journal of Liberal History* (2007), pp.54-5; E. Feuchtwanger, *Democracy and Empire: Britain, 1865-1914* (Bungay, 1985), pp.275-77; A. Sykes, *The Rise and Fall of British Liberalism, 1776-1988* (London, 1997), p.160, 167.

[35] Lawrence, *Speaking for the People*, p.265; Tanner, *Labour Party*, pp.40-41; Windscheffel, *Popular Conservatism*, p.201. P. Readman, *Land and Nation in England: Patriotism, National Identity, and the Politics of the Land, 1880-1914* (Woodbridge, 2008), pp.27-8; V. Bogdanor, 'The Liberal Party and the Constitution', *Journal of Liberal History* (2007), p.52.

inexorably shifting towards Labour and its class-based conception of politics.[36] According to this view, the short-term Edwardian revival of Liberalism – whether old or new – was the closing act in a political performance whose time was up.

This chapter will use the corpus to compare the Liberal campaigns of 1906 and 1910 (and the Unionist responses to them) to those of the previous six elections since 1880. On balance, the evidence suggests that important aspects of the Liberal language of 1906 and especially 1910 represented breaks from the past, although the bulk of the appeal (especially in 1906) was not new. Specific social reforms – National Insurance, Land Reform and (especially) Old Age Pensions – were frequently mentioned by Liberals, and in January 1910 especially, social proposals constituted an important part of their platform. However, while the emphasis on social questions was high compared to previous elections, it was still easily overshadowed in these three contests by Tariff Reform and the House of Lords, and matched by Chinese Labour in 1906 and Home Rule in December 1910. Perhaps most significantly, Lloyd George's People's Budget was seldom linked to social reform as an aspiration or to specific social policies, and Liberal speakers overwhelmingly preferred to use it as a stick to beat the Lords, rather than as the centrepiece of a material appeal to working-class voters, as some historians have suggested.[37]

This finding is also important because it has implications for what is perhaps the most controversial – and certainly the most debated – subject in British electoral politics in this period: the centrality of social class to party appeals and party performance. Surprisingly, this chapter finds that appeals to class in the elections of 1906 and 1910 – despite the battle with the Lords, the Budget, and the New Liberal social reforms – were not at their height in the final election campaigns before the Great War. In fact, specific mentions of 'class' were less frequent than they had been in the 1890s, and especially 1885. This arguably represents strong evidence that historians such as Stedman Jones, Lawrence, Tanner, and the essayists of *Party, State, and Society*, are broadly correct to view the language of class as a fluid and unstable aspect of electoral discourse whose prominence could rise

[36] R. McKibbin, *The Evolution of the British Labour Party, 1910-1924* (Oxford, 1974), pp.244-7; C. Cook, 'Labour and the Downfall of the Liberal Party, 1906-14', in C. Cook and A. Sked, (eds.), *Crisis and Controversy: Essays in Honour of A.J.P. Taylor* (1976); C. Wrigley, 'Liberals and the desire for Working Class Representation in Battersea, 1886-1922' in Brown, *Essays in Anti-Labour History*, p.243; L. Noonan, 'The Decline of the Liberal Party in British Politics', *Journal of Politics* (1954), p.30; K. Burgess, *The challenge of Labour: shaping British society, 1850-1930* (London, 1980); J. Hinton, *The first shop stewards movement* (1973), pp.332-7; J. Schneer, 'The war, the state and the workplace: British Dockers during 1914-1918' in J. Cronin and J. Schneer (eds.), *Social conflict and the political order in modern Britain* (1982); J. Cronin, *Labour and Society in Modern Britain 1918-1979* (1984); H. Pelling, *Popular politics and society in late Victorian Britain* (1979), pp.147-64.

[37] Clarke, *Lancashire*, pp.50-51; Searle, *Triumph*, pp.82-3; 98-9; Blewett, *Peers*, pp.408-9. See also Belchem, *Class, Party, and the Political System*, pp.45-46.

and fall from contest to contest, rather than as an inexorable rising tide which gradually enveloped political debate.[38]

Indeed, the lack of a particular appeal to class was also one of a number of factors that made the language of Liberalism distinct from that of Labour, who *did* emphasise it. They also prioritised Trades Unionism, capital, manufacturing, progressivism, and the condition of the poor a great deal more often than Liberals in the years 1906-1910, both in national meetings, and in Norwich through George Roberts. This suggests that Labour candidates in 1906 and 1910 forwarded a distinct appeal, and were more than appendages of Liberalism.[39] Indeed, while the Liberals may have electorally contained Socialism through the progressive alliance, this may have served to paper-over a challenge of words and ideas they faced from a party who perhaps spoke for an important body of working class electors (or perhaps non-electors who voted for the first time in 1918) more directly than they currently did.[40]

The second question concerns the impact of Tariff Reform on Unionist thinking and party fortunes. Historians have overwhelmingly seen Chamberlain's proposals as representing a dismal failure, condemning his party to three successive election defeats, including the rout of 1906. The most obvious problem was that it split the party: in 1906, candidates either endorsed Chamberlain in entirety (the so-called 'Whole-Hoggers'), rejected his proposals outright as 'Free Fooders' or followed Balfour into a position of lukewarm and partial support.[41] For a number of historians, the lack of unity in the Unionist camp, and the absence of clear leadership, was electorally debilitating. Worse still, it gave their still-fractured Liberal opponents the perfect cause to rally round: the totemic defence of Free Trade.[42] A second group of historians focus on the weak electoral appeal of Tariff Reform, arguing that it was unattractive to working class voters. For Trentmann, Marrison, Sykes, and Irwin, the benefits of fiscal reform were articulated primarily in terms of the effect on the producers of articles which would be protected, rather than the far greater number of consumers who ate the bread, wore the clothes, or used the consumables.[43] Furthermore, Tariff Reform was easy to caricature as

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[38] G. Stedman Jones, *Languages of Class: Studies in English Working Class History 1832-1982* (Cambridge, 1983), pp.7-8, 12, 19-24; Lawrence, *Speaking for the People*, pp.26-69; Tanner, *Labour Party*, pp.12-13, 420; J Lawrence and M. Taylor, (eds.) *Party, State and Society: Electoral Behaviour in Britain since 1820* (Aldershot, 1997).

[39] Blewett, *Peers*, p.109; Tanner, *Labour Party*, pp.284-313; Clarke, *Lancashire*, p.358, 379.

[40] Bernstein, 'Liberalism and the Progressive Alliance', pp.617-40, has outlined the underlying heated disagreements between the local Liberal and Labour parties in Norwich, Leeds, and Leicester (particularly at a municipal level) that were effectively masked by the Progressive Alliance at election time.

[41] Russell has estimated that 40% of Unionist candidates in 1906 endorsed Chamberlain, 55% Balfour, and just 3% ran as 'Free Fooders'. See Russell, *Liberal Landslide*, p.88.

[42] Russell, *Liberal Landslide*, pp.91, 99-100, 118, 182, 204-5; Fraser, 'Unionism and Tariff Reform', pp.165-6; Charmley, *Conservative Politics*, pp.27, 42-4; Belchem, *Class, Party and the Political System*, pp.30-31; M. Pugh, *The Making of Modern British politics 1867-1939* (Oxford, 1982), p.57.

[43] F. Trentmann, *Free Trade Nation* (Oxford, 2008), pp.69-80; A. Marrison, *British Business and Protection*, 1903-1932 (Oxford, 1996); A. Sykes, *Tariff Reform in British Politics*, 1903-1913 (Oxford, 1979); D. Irwin, 'The political economy of Free Trade: voting in the British general election of 1906', *Journal of Law & Economics* (1994).

representing a slide back towards Protectionism, and enabled Liberal speakers to claim that it would increase the price of food, and renew the hunger and destitution experienced in the 'hungry forties' under the Corn Laws. This – for Trentmann, Lynch, Clarke, Bentley and Searle – brought into play highly effective appeals such as 'the big and the little loaf' and the spectre of an impoverished working class fed on horseflesh and black bread as was supposedly eaten in Protectionist Germany.[44] The Tariff Reformers' arguments – even if they had been forwarded with unanimity – were theoretical, distant, and complex, and stood little chance against such visceral and down-to-earth appeals to material wellbeing. The fact that the Unionists were still preoccupied with this deeply divisive and electorally problematic issue even after December 1910 has led some historians – most famously Green and Blewett – to argue that the Tariff Reform schism was so divisive and intellectually and politically insoluble, that Edwardian Unionism was in a state of 'crisis' and drifting towards a heavy defeat in the general election expected in 1915, after which it might never have recovered. Green and Blewett thus see the advent of the Great War, and the resulting transformation of the political system and national zeitgeist as the saviour of Unionism.[45]

David Thackeray's recent article of 2011 is one of the few interventions which calls for a moderation of the negative consensus on Tariff Reform, although Windscheffel, Jackson, Readman, and Blaxill have also presented more mixed analyses which are more inclined to stress the relative strength of Edwardian Unionism in 1910 and the years that followed.[46] Thackeray's central contentions are, firstly, that Tariff Reform energised the Unionist grassroots – which paved the way for a recovery in by-elections during 1912-14 – and secondly, that the party *did* develop a strong consumer-based narrative which emphasised food prices, employment, and the boons of social reform in similarly punchy terms as the Free Traders. However, he stops shy of claiming that Tariff Reform was ever a clear vote-winner, attributing the Unionist success in by-elections after 1912 principally to other issues such as National Insurance and the re-emergence of Home Rule.[47]

This chapter will support Thackeray's re-interpretation, but will push it some way further, and contend that historians are wrong to paint such a consistently negative picture of Tariff Reform. While the policy was undoubtedly deeply divisive and problematic in 1906, it is far less fair to see the policy in the same light in the elections of 1910. As Green and Clarke have recognised, the fiscal proposals of 1910 were almost entirely different to what they had been four years previously, and represented much

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[44] Lynch, *Liberal Party*, pp.186-8; Clarke, *Lancashire*, pp. 284, 346-8, 352-3; Searle, *Triumph*, pp.78-9; Bentley, *Climax*, pp.108-10. See also P. Cain, 'Free Trade, social reform and Imperialism: J. Hobson and the dilemmas of Liberalism, 1890-1914' and A. Howe, 'Free Trade and the Victorians' in A. Marrison (ed.), *Freedom and trade, vol.1: Free Trade and its reception, 1815-1960* (1998), pp.208-9 and p.183 respectively.

[45] Green, *Crisis*, pp.268, 278-304, 332-3; Blewett, *Peers*, pp. 411-15. See also Witherell, 'Political Cannibalism', p.3; R. Blake, *The Conservative Party from Peel to Thatcher* (London, 1985), pp.167-95.

[46] Thackeray, 'Crisis of Conservatism', pp.194-200; Jackson, *Popular Opposition to Home Rule*; Windscheffel, *Popular Conservatism*, pp.204-5; P. Readman and L. Blaxill, 'Edwardian By-Elections', in P. Readman and T. Otte (eds.) *By-Elections in British Politics, 1832-1914* (Forthcoming in 2013).

[47] Thackeray, 'Crisis of Conservatism', pp. 202-210.

more of a bold and general Protectionist programme.[48] This chapter will build on this idea by suggesting that we should see the Tariff Reform of January and December 1910 as a quite different creature to its predecessor of 1906, not just in the details of the proposals, but in terms of its whole electoral appeal. The chapter argues that the fiscal question was no longer divisive in 1910, and was almost unanimously and enthusiastically forwarded by Unionists in East Anglia (and elsewhere) despite the crowded national agenda also featuring the Budget, the Lords' veto, and the re-emergence of Home Rule. More specifically, it suggests that East Anglian Unionists did develop a strong narrative based on the consumer in 1910 that had been missing in 1906. Perhaps most surprisingly, it will demonstrate that the much-celebrated and formidable Liberal counter – the defence of Free Trade – was widespread only in 1906, and that the party's preoccupation with the House of Lords caused it to slip from prominence in both 1910 contests. When this is laid alongside the fact that the Unionists in January 1910 achieved a national swing almost as large as the Liberals had four years previously, it seems equally fair to conclude that Tariff Reform may have played an underestimated role in the recovery of Unionism four years after the debacle of 1906.

III

The New Liberalism

E.J. Feutchwanger makes the obvious but often overlooked point that 'New Liberalism' was seldom used as an Edwardian election slogan.[49] Indeed, this can be pushed further: in the corpus' entire unweighted body of text for these three elections (around 750,000 words) the term was *never* used either in East Anglia or by national leaders. Several historians have also pointed out that the party in the country almost certainly lagged well behind the intellectual and philosophical cockpit of the New Liberal thinkers and writers.[50] Indeed, R.E. Ellins' study found little evidence of any progressive motivation in the letters of leading Edwardian Liberal statesmen.[51] In the absence of these clues, it is difficult for historians to determine what kind of appeals, slogans, and vocabulary might reliably indicate the adoption of New Liberal ideas by a politician. Was the attack on the House of Lords in 1910, for example, an old-fashioned attack on feudalism, or a bid to lambast the opposition to progressive New Liberal ideas that would raise the material condition of the working classes?

There is one area, however, where most historians more or less agree that Edwardian Liberalism represented a clear break from the past: social reforms such as Old Age Pensions, labour exchanges, and National Insurance. The difficulty has been in accessing how often these reforms were actually mentioned in election speeches across the country, and on this question, historians are very much divided. Those who stress the continuing electoral viability of Liberalism in the face of the

[48] Green, *Crisis*, p.184; Clarke, *Lancashire*, p.352.

[49] Feuchtwanger, *Democracy and Empire*, p.277.

[50] Dutton, 'Liberals in 1906: Flourishing or Doomed? The Pessimistic View', p.55; Packer, 'Economic Strategies', p.24.

[51] R. Ellins, 'Aspects of the New Liberalism' (PhD, Sheffield, 1980), pp.144-5. Cited in Searle, *Triumph*, p.108.

Labour challenge tend to view the social reforms – financed by Lloyd George's revenue-raising Budget – as a central tenet of the Liberal platform.[52] Indeed, Russell's election address analysis has shown that even in 1906, two-thirds of Liberal candidates mentioned 'New Liberal' social reforms.[53] Clarke – the most influential of these historians – sees the New Liberal message as a broader championing of social justice which, he argues, also made the Chinese Labour issue in 1906, and the progressive alliance with Labour, exemplars of the 'new' appeal.[54] These historians also find a degree of support from Windscheffel – who also finds that pensions, the minimum wage, and taxation of land were prioritised in London in 1906 – and Readman, who sees the New Liberal ideas on land valuation as adding additional fuel to the party's Edwardian rural revival.[55]

On the other side of the argument, there are a number of historians who dispute the conversion to social reform. For Belchem, Feutchwanger, Dutton, Bentley, and Morgan, it was seldom mentioned, especially in 1906, which was a largely negative and retaliatory victory for Free Trade achieved against a spectacular own-goal by the Unionists.[56] Finally, there are historians who are still more sceptical: Searle, Lynch, Sykes, and Dawson take the view that, whilst social reform might have been widely mentioned, that it had more in common with the older radicalism of the 1880s and 1890s than any mould-breaking new ideas.[57]

The logical first use of the corpus is to investigate the presence of social reform in party vocabulary in 1906 and 1910 in East Anglia, and on the national stage. Appendix 5.2 charts the visibility of the four most prominent New Liberal social reform proposals amongst both parties for each of the three Edwardian general elections.[58] These were Old Age Pensions, Land Reform, National Insurance and labour exchanges, and workmen's compensation and medical relief.[59] Although there

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[52] Packer, 'Economic Strategies', p.23; Pugh, *Making of Modern British Politics*, p.118 and 'Liberals in 1906: Flourishing or Doomed? The Optimistic View', pp.56-7; Lewis 'Welsh Ideal', p.340.

[53] Russell, *Liberal Landslide*, pp.65-6, 71-2.

[54] Clarke, *Lancashire*, pp.356-8, 398-9.

[55] Windscheffel, *Popular Conservatism*, p.201; Readman, *Land and Nation*, pp.102-9.

[56] Belchem, *Class, Party and the Political System*, pp. 45-6, 49; Feuchtwanger, *Democracy and Empire*, pp.275-77; Dutton, 'Liberals in 1906: Flourishing or Doomed? The Pessimistic View', pp.54-5; Morgan, 'The New Liberalism' and Bentley, 'The Liberal Response to Socialism', pp. 180-1 and pp.43-44 respectively. See also Bentley, *Climax*, pp.109-10.

[57] Searle, *Triumph*, pp.79, 84-5, 109; Sykes, *Rise and Fall*, p. 160; Lynch, *Liberal Party*, pp.190-218; Dawson, 'Old Time Religion', p.432.

[58] In order to measure the visibility of these issues, taxonomies were compiled using the most reliable correlating keywords for each issue. For pensions, this was simply 'pension'; for Land Reform, this was 'land', 'allotment', and 'smallholding'; for employment legislation, this was 'labour exchange', and 'insurance' (this being carefully separated from the proposals for general remedial action for unemployment, and the effects of Tariff Reform); for compensation/medical legislation, this was 'sick', 'ill', 'health', 'medical', and 'compensation'. Finally, appeals for 'social reform' in an abstract sense, and those concerning society were measured through 'social reform', 'social', and 'society'. Naturally, all the keywords were investigated in their original context to ensure they corresponded to the issue in question. For a full breakdown of the scores for all three elections, see Appendix 5.4.

[59] Although Land Reform might not have unambiguously translated to social reform in the way that (for example) Old Age Pensions, or National Insurance might have done, it seems reasonable – given the way most Edwardian Liberals connected

were other social reforms such as free school meals and coal mining regulation, none of these achieved more than the odd mention across the period and so are not displayed. Finally, Appendix 5.4 also shows abstract mentions of 'social reform' and 'society'. These readings are reproduced as Figure 5.1 below:

the possession of land to social betterment, and were prepared to use state power to redistribute it and tax it – to treat it broadly as such. See Readman, *Land and Nation*, pp.150-60.

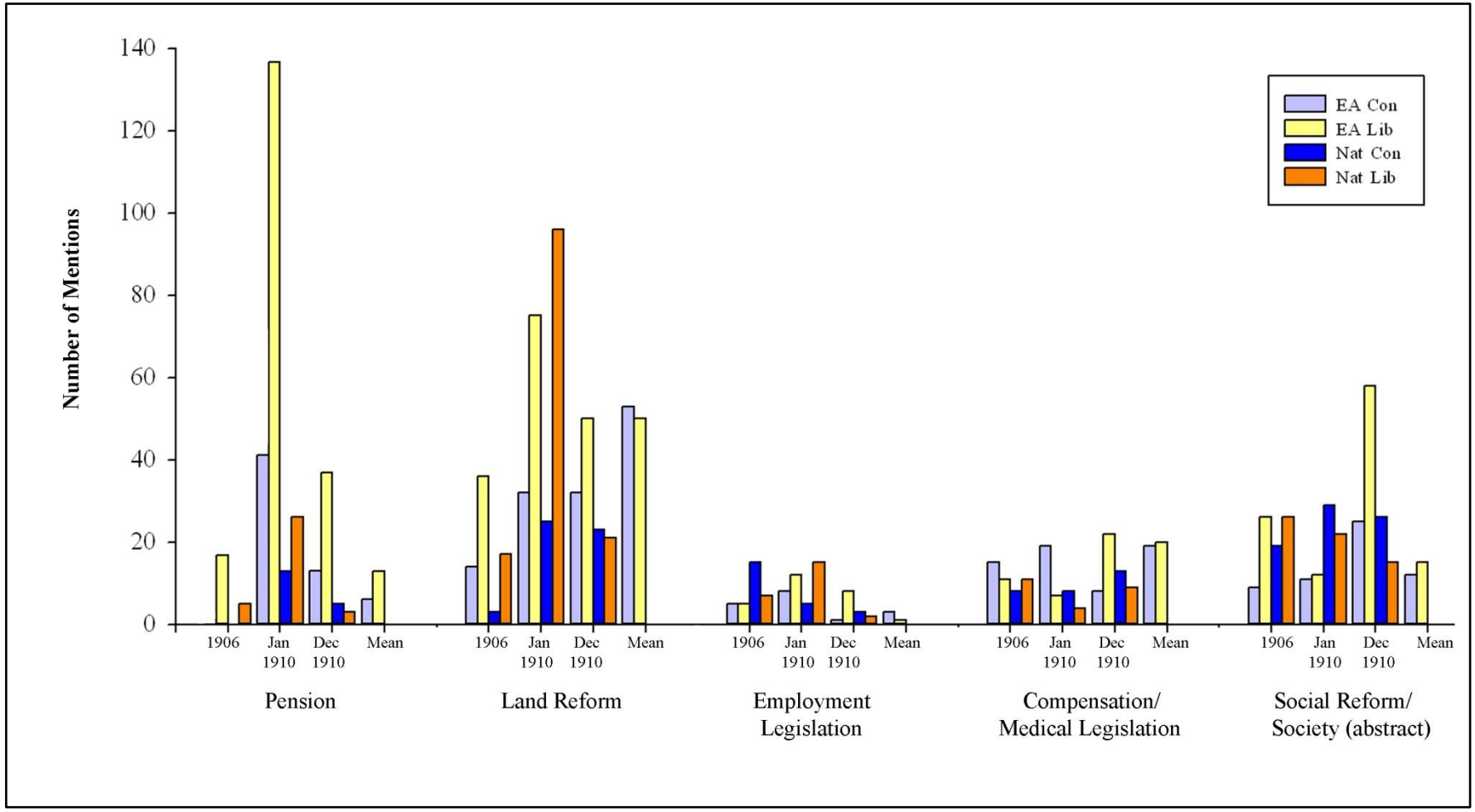

Figure 5.1: Social Reform, 1906-1910

See Appendix 5.4.

Figure 5.1 suggests that Old Age Pensions was clearly the standout measure of social reform in January 1910, achieving a sizeable 133 mentions from East Anglian Liberals, compared to their 1880-1900 average of just 13. Its star rose only briefly, however, and by December mentions were down to 38, just four fewer than in 1900 (39). Nevertheless, the excitement in January 1910 was considerable, and references from Liberals were universally positive. For Everett (Woodbridge) Old Age Pensions represented 'the greatest act which aimed at the comfort of the poor which had ever been passed' and for Frederick Low (Norwich) it was 'a magnificent measure... Old Age Pensions would live in the people's memories for many generations'.[60] Indeed, no other individual social reform proposal in the period came close to matching the impact pensions achieved in January 1910.

Figure 5.1 also shows that Land Reform was frequently mentioned by East Anglian Liberals in all three contests. Rowley Elliston (Woodbridge) promised it would give the people 'a piece of land that they could farm themselves, and enjoy the profit of [their] labour' and Silvester Horne (Ipswich) predicted that it would cause England to 'again be covered by the peasant proprietors'.[61] The issue also (largely on account of the efforts of Lloyd George and Asquith) penetrated the national stage in 1910, something it had struggled to do previously.[62] Nevertheless, Land Reform's Edwardian prominence arguably simply reflected the continuing salience of these questions in East Anglia since 1885: only in January 1910 did Edwardian Liberals manage to eclipse their party's Victorian (1880-1900) average of 72, while Edwardian Unionists did not come close to matching theirs. Other measures of social reform were seldom mentioned in 1906 and 1910: employment legislation, workmen's compensation, and medical relief all failed to excite much attention. However, the approximately 10-20 mentions each received per contest were uniformly positive, and the scores were still a great deal higher than the secondary social issues of the Newcastle Programme in 1892 or 1895.[63] 'Social Reform' as an abstract appeal – and mentions of society – were not discernibly on the increase amongst either party until December 1910, where both East Anglian Liberals and Unionists achieved their highest scores for the period, with the Liberals' 56 being more than double their previous high of 26 in 1906. This conceivably indicates that while mentions of specific social measures had receded from the excitement of January, that the abstract ideal remained important.

Figure 5.1 also suggests two other noteworthy points. The first is that the national and East Anglian pictures are quite mixed. Local speakers of both parties universally outscored their national counterparts at all three elections on pensions and Land Reform, whereas national speakers generally held the advantage on the more minor social measures. The second is simply that the Liberals generally enjoyed large leads over Unionists. As Figure 5.1 shows, they led their opponents in East Anglia on net mentions of 'social reform' and society in all three elections, and in two of the three on the national stage. More significantly, if we return to Appendix 5.4 and total all the scores (for both

[60] *East Anglian Daily Times*, 29 Dec 1909; *Eastern Evening News*, 17 Jan 1910.

[61] *Evening Star*, 28 Nov 1910; *East Anglian Daily Times*, 10 Jan 1910.

[62] For the difference in the visibility in Land Reform in East Anglia and nationally, see Appendix 2.1.

[63] See Figure 3.11, 4.3, and Appendix 3.5.

East Anglia and the national stage) for all three contests, the Liberal aggregate is 828 mentions to the Unionists' 456. In other words, the Edwardian Liberals mentioned social reform or specific measures of social reform almost twice as often as their opponents over a very wide sample of language during these three elections. Indeed, by December 1910, perhaps the Unionists did not even wish to outbid their Liberal opponents on this front: Arthur Fell (Yarmouth) preferred his party's 'sane progressive social reform instead of the mad policy... [of] the Radical Government' and Willie Dyson (Norwich) advocated 'fair play to each interest' above the 'extravagant expenditure, and proposals galore of social reforms which meant the expenditure of millions of money.'[64]

While this quantitative data is interesting, it falls short of painting a comprehensive picture, or fully answering the extent to which social reform was really a mainstay of the Edwardian Liberal Party's appeal in these three elections. Their scores might have been high relative to the Unionists, but were they also high in comparison with other important contemporary issues? In other words, was social reform the main weapon of Liberal speakers, or simply one of a number? Figure 5.2 below investigates this, displaying an aggregate score for the five social reforms shown in Figure 5.1 ('Social Reform Combined') and comparing this with Free Trade, Tariff Reform, the Budget, the navy, Chinese Labour, the House of Lords, Ireland, and Balfour's proposed referendum:[65]

[64] *Yarmouth Mercury*, 3 Dec 1910; *Norwich Argus*, 26 Nov 1910.

[65] The taxonomies used were as follows: for Free Trade, the keywords were 'Free Trade', 'bread', 'food', 'corn', and 'wheat'; for Tariff Reform, these were 'tariff', 'fiscal', 'duty', 'preference', and 'Protection'; for the Budget these were 'Budget', 'valuation', and 'Lloyd George'; for the Navy, these were 'navy', 'ship', 'dreadnought', and 'fleet'; for Chinese Labour these were 'China', 'slave', 'labour', and 'mine'; for the House of Lords these were 'Lords', 'peers', and 'veto'; for Ireland these were 'Ireland' and 'Home Rule'; for the referendum this was simply 'referendum'. See Appendix 5.5A-5.5G for full scores.

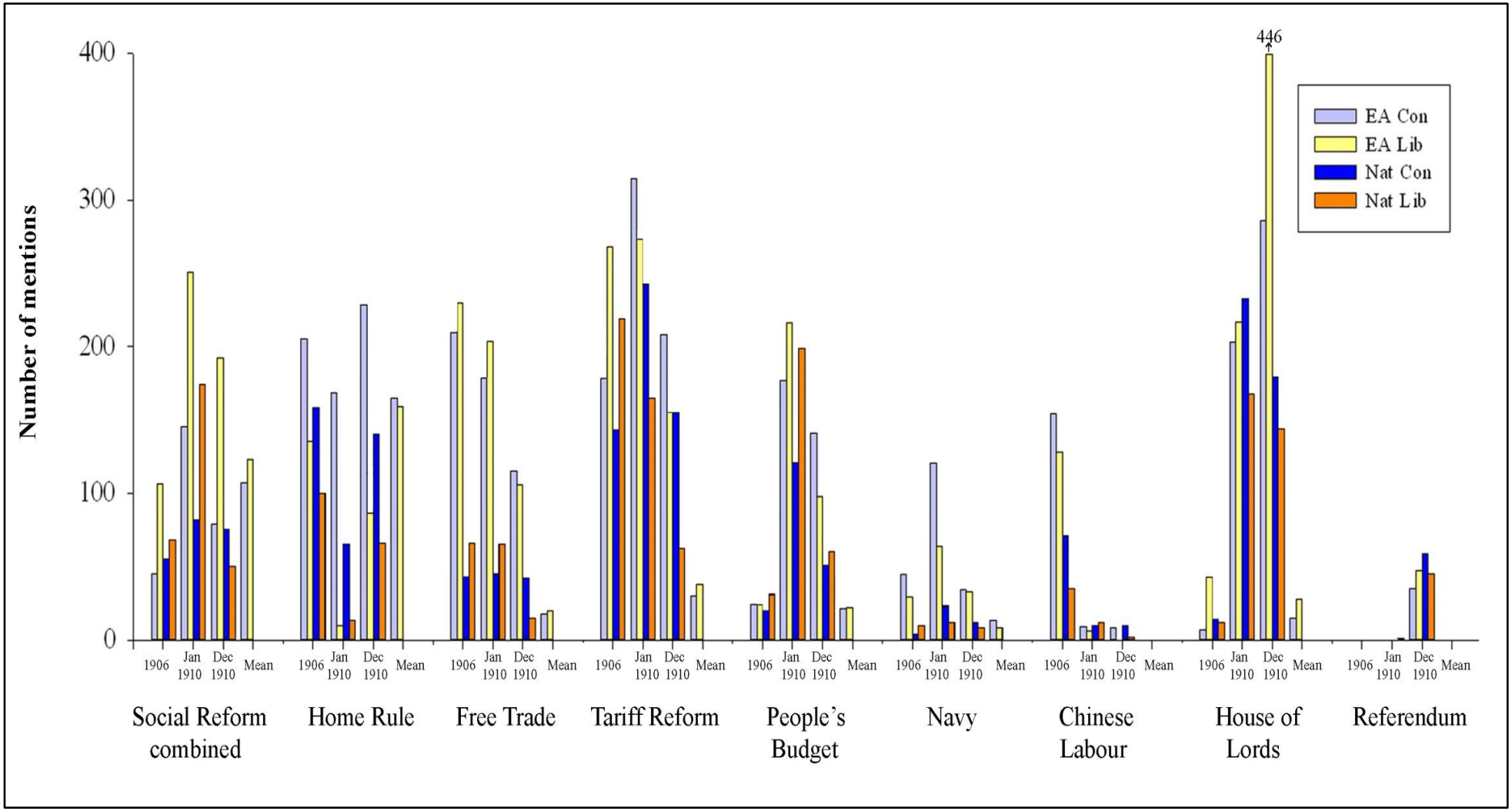

Figure 5.2: Social Reform in Context: The Main Issues, 1906-1910

See Appendix 5.4 and 5.5A-G. 'Social Reform Combined' shows the aggregate readings for all the measures of social reform shown in Appendix 5.4 and Figure 5.1.

Figure 5.2 very much places social reform in context, and shows it to be one of a number of hot-button issues which also attained high prominence in these elections.[66] While social reform (in both East Anglia and nationally) easily eclipsed the naval scare in 1910, the referendum in December 1910, and (perhaps most significantly) was roughly on par with Free Trade in January and December 1910, it was easily overshadowed by several other issues. The House of Lords (in 1910) and Tariff Reform (throughout) engendered almost double the number of mentions, and Chinese Labour also exceeded it in 1906. Perhaps most significant is that Home Rule – an issue Clarke describes as 'dead as a doornail' in 1906 and January 1910 – loomed just as large as social reform throughout, even though the vast majority of references came from the Unionist side.[67] The People's Budget was widely mentioned in both 1910 contests by East Anglian Liberals, but was linked by speakers to the House of Lords in 75% of instances, and to social reform in just 10%. Finally, it should be pointed out that, if anything, these readings may inflate the prominence of social reform relative to these other issues because the scores presented in Figure 5.2 are combined readings: they are made up (as Appendix 5.4 shows) of considerably more constituent keywords than, for instance, Home Rule (three) and the House of Lords (just two).

It is also pertinent to ask whether Liberal candidates themselves even regarded their appeal as 'new' compared to previous elections. The evidence from speeches seems to points both ways. In 1906, five East Anglian candidates (Goddard, Tillett, Everett, Heaton-Armstrong, and Gurdon) campaigned under the old watchwords of 'peace, retrenchment, and reform', although the famous slogan was entirely absent from Liberal speeches in the region in January and December 1910. When speakers had the opportunity to extol the progressivism of the People's Budget, they chose instead to attack those who had thwarted it, often in remarkably violent language. Platt (Yarmouth) declared that the Liberal mission was 'to kill the Lords' and Everett wanted to see them 'hanged on those gallows ... [that] they hung the Budget'.[68] Horne, meanwhile, wanted them 'hung from the neck until dead', and Price (East Norfolk) boasted that 'the constituencies were killing them...three-quarters had been killed, and the rest of the assassination was going to be perpetrated in a very few days'.[69] That the Liberals overwhelmingly preferred to use the Budget to smite their foes than praise their own policies may, on the other hand, simply remind us once again that the platform was always more a tool for political attack than defence, or perhaps that the Liberals simply believed their social reforms were so self-evidently virtuous that they did not need to be expounded upon. Although declarations of new eras are something of a cliché in political language, some speakers did seem to genuinely believe in 1910 that a new politics was upon them. For Horne, this was 'an era of politics of a new kind, and they were beginning to pay attention to the great simplicities of life, and secure for us a heritage for the people of

[66] It is noteworthy that in these three elections, four to five issues easily generate over 100 mentions per sub-corpus (often over 150). In the previous elections, this was usually achieved by only two or three. See Appendices 2-5.

[67] Clarke, *Lancashire*, pp.372-3.

[68] *East Anglian Daily Times* 6 and 8 Jan 1910.

[69] *East Anglian Daily Times* 18 Jan 1910; *Eastern Evening News*, 12 Dec 1910.

England', while for Elliston, December 1910 represented 'the dawn of a new era of social reform- with fair laws and equal opportunities, they would give every man and woman an equal chance.'[70]

How, then, should we regard the Liberal social reform platform in these campaigns, and by extension, the novelty of the New Liberalism in electoral politics? In a statistical sense, the party's appeal to social reform was clearly overshadowed by other Edwardian issues. However, this was perhaps a function of the peculiar concentration of burning national disputes in these elections, which caused an issue like pensions to be rather outshone in January 1910; had it been similarly forwarded in 1895 (for example) it would probably have ranked as the most-mentioned topic for Liberal speakers. Indeed, looking back into the 1880s and 1890s, it seems difficult to argue there was a comparable focus on social questions on either the local or national stage, except perhaps in East Anglia in 1885. Local Option was important in 1895 for Liberals (70 mentions) but was arguably not really an issue of social reform. Likewise, the Newcastle Programme – while considerably underestimated by historians – was not primarily a manifesto of social legislation, and even those proposals which did reasonably qualify (such as Employers' Liability) generated a fraction of the mentions achieved by Welsh Disestablishment, Parish Councils, and One-man-one-vote.[71] In this context, then, those historians who view the Liberal appeal to social reform in 1906 and 1910 as a break from the past are perhaps right: the New Liberals outshone their predecessors, and quite clearly outshone the Unionists, although this perhaps better reflected the continually low visibility of social reform in previous elections than any triumph for a dynamic new political ideology. The New Liberal flute could thus be heard in these elections, but it was generally drowned out by the rest of the orchestra.

* * *

A deeper question is how far this New Liberalism – with its modest emphasis on social reforms – was forwarded using a new language of class politics. The question of class has divided historical scholars like no other.[72] Traditionally, historians were interested in the relationship between sociology and voting behaviour: the ontological reality of social class was seldom disputed. In the 1980s, the 'linguistic turn' increasingly encouraged historians to see 'class' as a discursive tool which could be used to create, define, and shape political identity and world-views through language. Unfortunately, despite the fundamental disagreement on whether class should be thought of as an inherently teleological or linguistic phenomenon, historians continue to use the term freely and casually, often without explaining exactly what they mean by it. Patrick Joyce tries to tackle this problem in his *Visions of the People* but instead of going beyond the inherent limitations of definitions, he becomes entangled by them, and suggests that class should be thought of as 'labour populism' or alternatively 'a

[70] *East Anglian Daily Times*, 14 Jan 1910; *Evening Star*, 8 Dec 1910.

[71] See Figures 3.11 and 4.3.

[72] For a full discussion of the influence of class on British political historiography, see Lawrence, *Speaking for the People*, pp.11-25.

sense of conflict of struggle, social exclusivity, and the primacy of economic interests divided along the capital/labour axis'.[73] Rather than attempting such inevitably arbitrary definitions – or the acutely problematic task of compiling a taxonomy of class – this section will take as its starting point Stedman Jones' simple but sensible suggestion that historians should directly investigate the word 'class' itself within its linguistic context.[74]

What follows is an analysis of the term 'class' throughout the whole 1880-1910 period, with the aim of assessing whether its visibility peaked in the Edwardian period. Such an analysis is limited, of course, by the impossibility of knowing exactly what each politician meant when he mentioned 'class', a term which appears a total of 1,198 times in both corpora over these nine elections. Speakers in 1910 might have defined 'class' somewhat differently than their 1880 predecessors. Indeed, William Harcourt pronounced class politics as having arrived in 1894, and Louis Harcourt made a similar comment in 1910, suggesting that father and son may have conceived of the notion slightly differently.[75] However, some basic quantification can nevertheless yield interesting insights on 'class', even if a flawless holistic and diachronic understanding of the term's fluctuating nuances is too great a challenge.

The majority of historians tend to agree that 'class' lay at the heart of Edwardian political discourse. The electoral sociologists take it more or less as given that it had become the *lingua franca* of electoral politics by the eve of the Great War and indeed some decades before (Cornford famously put it as early as 1868).[76] Indeed, Clarke and Blewett's central contention of the continued electoral viability of the New Liberalism is not based just on the party's positive stance on social reform, but on its successful adoption of what the latter calls 'campaigns with a strong class motif'.[77] Indeed, the relative success enjoyed by the Edwardian Liberal Party in riding the tiger of class is also emphasised by Searle, Sykes, Belchem, and Feutchwanger.[78] From the Unionist perspective, Green argues that Balfour and Chamberlain's party attempted to meet this challenge by 'speaking the language of class with a Conservative accent'.[79]

On the opposite side, there are a number of recent local studies. While almost all these works are highly sceptical of the notion of underlying or automatic sociological political allegiances in this period, there are some – most particularly Lawrence, Windscheffel, and Roberts – who nevertheless

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[73] P. Joyce, *Visions of the People: Industrial England and the Question of Class, 1840-1914* (Cambridge, 1991), pp.11, 339-40.

[74] Stedman Jones, *Languages of Class*, p.7.

[75] William Harcourt cited in K. Wald, 'The Rise of Class-based Voting in London', *Comparative Politics* (1977), p.226; Louis Harcourt cited in Clarke, *Lancashire*, p.363.

[76] J. Cornford, 'The transformation of Conservatism in the late 19th century', *Victorian Studies* (1963), p.37.

[77] Blewett, *Peers*, p.408; P. Clarke, 'Electoral sociology of modern Britain', *History* (1972), pp.50-1; *Lancashire*, p.406.

[78] Searle, *Triumph*, pp.82-83, 98-99, 111; Sykes, *Rise and Fall*, p.162; Belchem, *Class, Party, and the Political System*, pp.45-6; Feutchwanger, *Democracy and Empire*, p.292-3.

[79] Green, *Crisis*, p.262.

acknowledge the potential power of the language of class.[80] Then there are also historians who do not make this distinction, and see class-based appeals as remarkably weak in comparison to those of religion, tradition, community, and locality.[81] They are joined, perhaps ironically, by the Labour historians such as McKibbin, Pelling, and Cook who – while taking a more squarely sociological view of politics – emphasise the *failure* of the Liberals to speak the language of class increasingly employed by Labour.[82] For his part, Joyce is helpfully specific, noting that 'class terms are remarkable for their absence' and suggesting that Liberals tended to 'appeal to collectives other than class'.[83]

We can paint a simple initial picture by tracking the lemma 'class' across the nine elections of the period. Figure 5.3 below simply shows bi-partisan aggregate readings for both East Anglia and the national stages combined. This is followed by Figure 5.4, which shows these results broken down, to compare the grassroots with the national picture. The full readings for both figures can be found in Appendix 5.6.

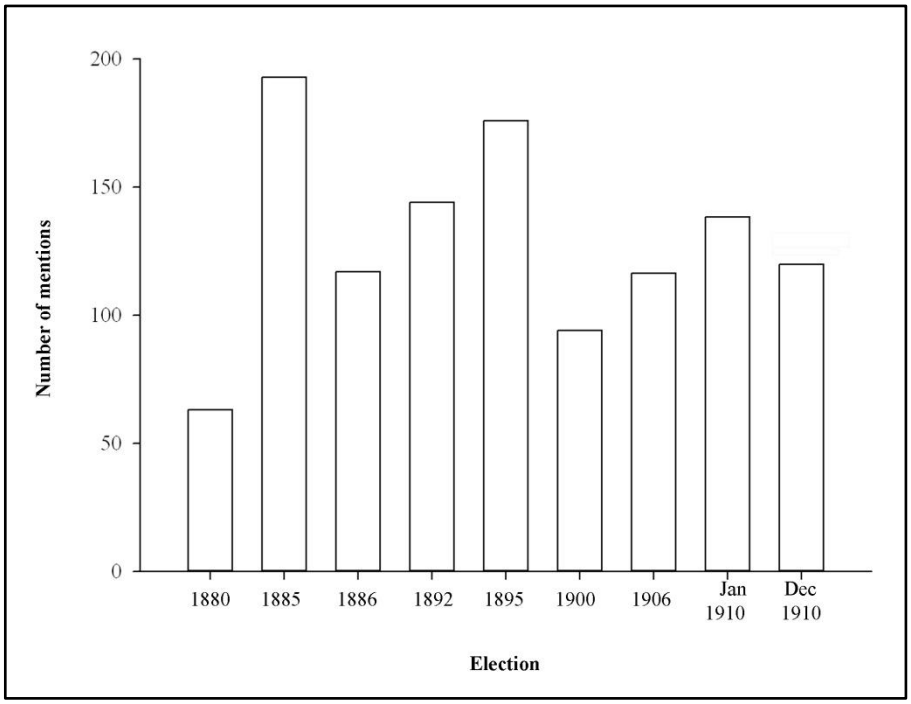

Figure 5.3: 'Class' in Electoral Politics, 1880-1910

See Appendix 5.6. This graph shows combined aggregate scores for both parties: East Anglia, and the national stage.

[80] Lawrence, *Speaking for the People*, pp.224-5, 265-6; Windscheffel, *Popular Conservatism*, pp.12-13; M. Roberts, 'Constructing a Tory world-view: popular politics and the Conservative press in late-Victorian Leeds', *Historical Research* (2006).

[81] Lynch, *Liberal Party*, pp.219-225; C. MacDonald, 'Locality, Tradition and Language in the Evolution of Scottish Unionism: A Case Study, Paisley, 1886-1910', in C. MacDonald (ed.) *Unionist Scotland, 1800-1997* (Edinburgh, 1998), p.67; T. Griffiths, *The Lancashire working classes, c.1880-1930* (Oxford, 2001), pp.318-9.

[82] McKibbin, *Labour Party*; Cook, 'Labour and the downfall of the Liberal Party'; Pelling, *Popular Politics and Society*.

[83] Joyce, *Visions*, p.55, 68.

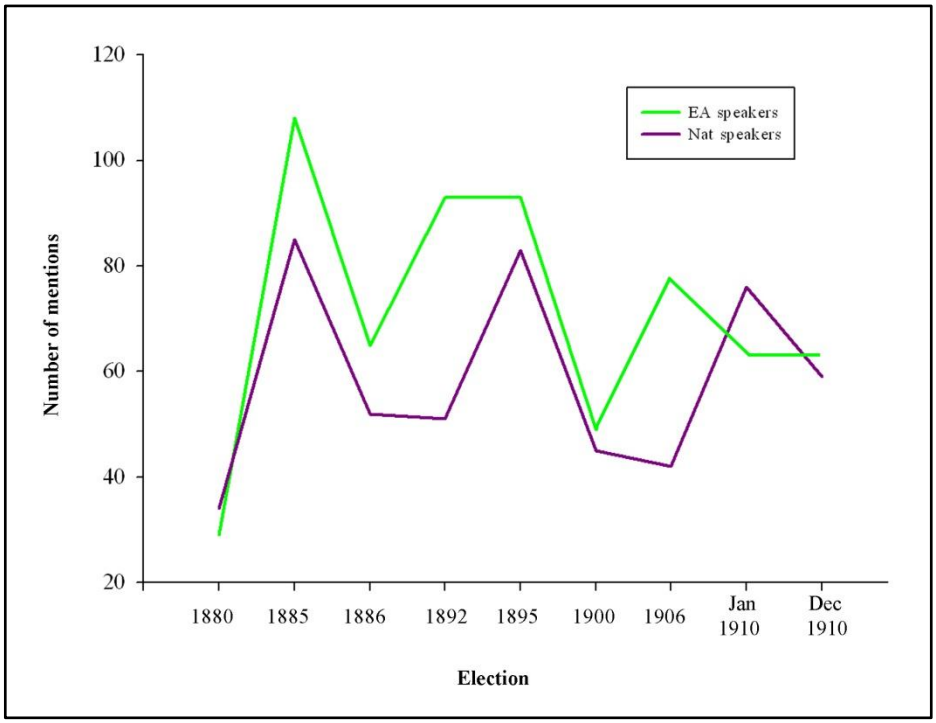

Figure 5.4: 'Class' 1880-1910: A Comparison between East Anglia and the National Stage

See Appendix 5.6. This graph shows the scores for both parties combined.

Figures 5.3 and 5.4 show – far from representing the apex of the visibility of language of class – that the three Edwardian elections were fairly average in the context of the period. Figure 5.3 shows that January 1910, December 1910, and 1906 are in fourth, fifth and sixth place respectively. Figure 5.4 generally confirms the reliability of these trends: whilst the East Anglian readings are always slightly higher than their national equivalents, the fluctuations seen in Figure 5.3 hold for seven of the nine elections; only in 1892 and 1906 was there a noticeable divergence between the local and national stages. Overall, the Edwardian readings seem surprisingly low, especially for January 1910: a contest singled out by Clarke, Blewett, Searle, and others as the very exemplar of the new language of class politics which was so different from previous decades.[84] Instead of showcasing a new *lingua franca*, January 1910 is comfortably exceeded by 1895 and 1885, leading us to the counter-intuitive conclusion that the very first election after the Third Reform Act exhibited a more intense appeal to 'class' than did the last election before the Fourth. On the face of it, it seems quite possible that the influence of programme politics in 1885, 1895 (and 1892, which is in fourth position) may have proved a more powerful promulgator of the language of class than even the 'Peers versus the People'.

Having established this general trend, we can use the corpus to look deeper. The next question to ask is whether this lower-than-anticipated employment of 'class' in Edwardian elections was the function of a particular party. Figures 5.5 and 5.6 below investigate this in more detail:

[84] Blewett, *Peers*, p.408; Searle, *Triumph*, pp.82-83, 98-99, 111; P. Clarke, 'Electoral Sociology of Modern Britain', *History* (1972), pp.50-1; *Lancashire*, p.406.

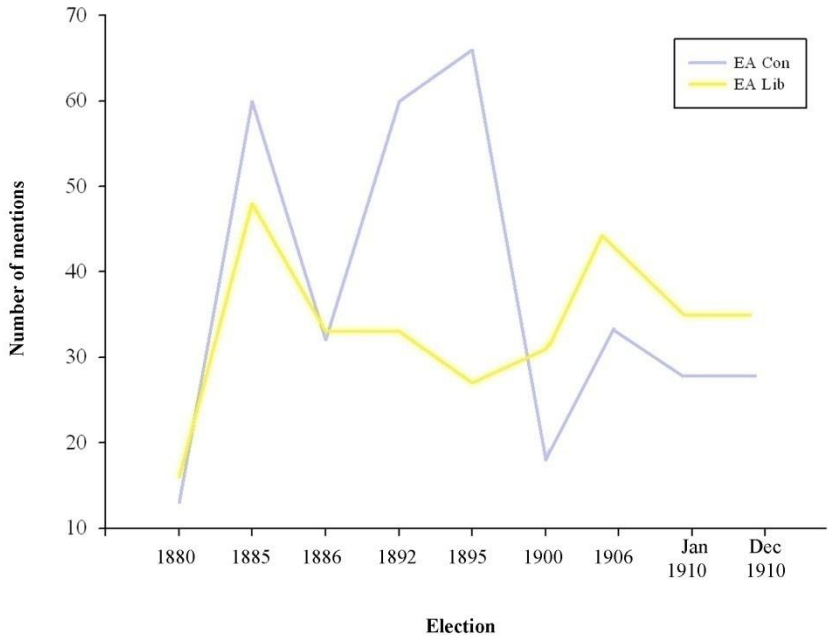

Figure 5.5: 'Class' in East Anglia 1880-1910: A Comparison between Parties

See Appendix 5.6.

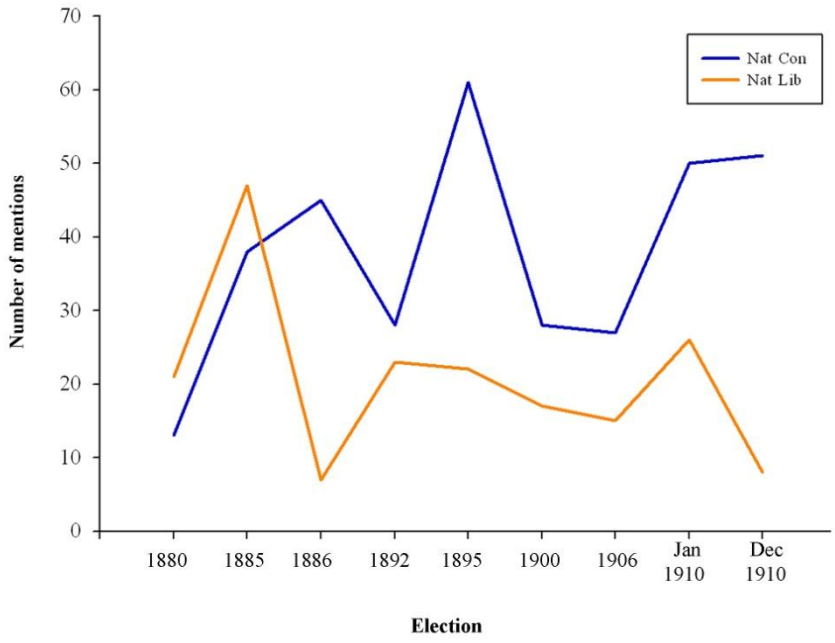

Figure 5.6: 'Class' on the National Stage 1880-1910: A Comparison between Parties

See Appendix 5.6.

The immediate and obvious finding of Figures 5.5 and 5.6 is that Conservatives generally lead Liberals in mentions of 'class', especially on the national stage'. The average per-election Unionist score in East Anglia is 39 (compared to 33 for the Liberals) while on the national stage they lead by an average of 38 mentions to 21. Of the two graphs, Figure 5.5 shows a much tighter correlation between the parties – especially in the Edwardian period – which could reflect the greater interconnectedness of

local speaking campaigns compared to their more geographically and chronologically dispersed national counterparts. Indeed, only in 1892 and 1895 is there a major difference between the East Anglian parties' employment of 'class', whereas on national stage in Figure 5.6, big Unionist leads can be seen in four of the nine contests.

It would be wrong, of course, to place too much stock on Figures 5.3-5.6 by themselves. This is mainly because the language of class could manifest itself in subtler ways than those captured by the relatively crude mechanism of simply tracking the lemma 'class'. The term itself could also, as noted, shift in meaning over time. In 1880, 'class' was very seldom mentioned (a noteworthy point in itself), but when it was, it was generally in an agricultural context in East Anglia. Everett appealed to his 'brother farmer electors' to 'sow the seed...swing the sickle and reap...let them send to Parliament one of their own class, and then the harvest would begin' whereas Sir R.J. Buxton contrasted the farmers with 'that very powerful class in this country, the landlords'.[85] In 1885 this perception sometimes persisted in the rural divisions: Joseph Arch was proudly introduced as a 'class worker' and a 'class legislator' by the chairman at North-West Norfolk meeting, who outlined how their candidate would forward the class interests of the agricultural labourer while 'not forget[ting] the farmer or the land-owner'.[86] In the boroughs, class appeals lacked the agricultural flavour, but could still be quite locally specific: the caucusite radical Richard Wright praised 'the small shopkeepers and better-class of working men of Norwich' while John Colomb in Yarmouth described himself in 1895 as a representative 'of the sea-faring class'.[87]

By 1910, however, it would be fair to say that what was meant by 'class' was becoming more generic, and this was reflected by the fact that 31 of the 72 (43%) mentions in East Anglia included the prefix '*working* class'. Kenneth Kemp (North-Norfolk) complained that 'during the past year £70,000 less money had been earned by the working class than in the previous year', Daniel-Ford Goddard (Ipswich) bemoaned that 'taxes upon the working classes were too heavy, and upon the wealthy classes too light', and F.W. Hirst (Sudbury) lamented that 'there was no country where the working classes as a whole had such a poor time as they had in this'.[88] In 1880, just three out of the 29 (10%) mentions of class had included the prefix 'working', and in 1886 it was also just eight out of 65 (12%). In 1885 and 1895, these scores were 30 out of 108 (28%) and 29 out of 93 (31%) respectively. Perhaps it can thus be suggested that while the term 'class' in Edwardian politics was less widespread than historians have imagined, that it was also becoming more fixedly associated with 'working class' (a finding also supported by Figure 5.7 below). However, the 31 mentions of 'working class' in January 1910 in East Anglia still represent scant evidence of a transformation when compared to the readings of 30 and 29 for 1885 and 1895 respectively, particularly when we consider that by December 1910, this score fell back to 16 (of a total of 62 mentions of 'class').

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[85] *Suffolk Chronicle*, 27 Mar 1880; *Norwich Argus*, 27 Mar 1880.

[86] *Lynn News*, 30 Dec 1885.

[87] *Eastern Evening News*, 6 Nov 1885; *Yarmouth Mercury*, 6 Jul 1895.

[88] *Norwich Argus*, 8 Jan 1910; *Eastern Evening News*, 10 Jan 1910; *East Anglian Daily Times*, 15 Jan 1910.

On balance, it seems reasonable to conclude that neither the advent of the Edwardian period, the New Liberalism, or the Unionist counter to the perceived 'Socialism' of the People's Budget promulgated a new language of class politics. Given Kenneth Wald's statistical analysis– which shows class-voting supposedly incrementally increasing over the 1880-1910 period – we might reasonably have expected the usage of the term in platform speeches to rise similarly.[89] More substantively, we might also have expected election rhetoric to mirror the general evolution of British English language in these years. Interestingly, it is in fact now possible to measure the evolution of vocabulary using Google's recently released NGram software which can estimate patterns in the general usage of nominated words over time in British English.[90] The NGram below (Figure 5.7) demonstrates the increasing usage of 'class', 'worker', and 'working' from 1880 to 1910, with a notable spike in all three between the turn of the century and the war. This suggests that Edwardian authors, journalists, playwrights, commentators, and businessmen were using these three words more often than their Victorian predecessors. But this general change in the Edwardian linguistic environment did not seem to affect politicians on the election trail: a finding which renders the trends shown in Figures 5.3-5.6 more surprising.

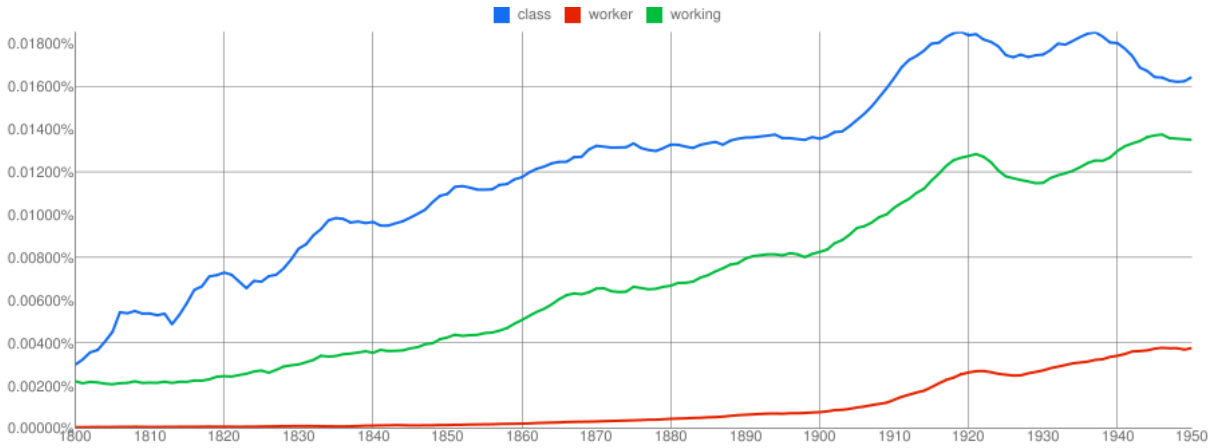

Figure 5.7: NGram showing use of 'class', 'worker', and 'working' in British English, 1800-1950

Generated at http://www.books.google.com/ngrams

[89] Wald, 'The Rise of Class-based Voting', p.223.

[90] Google NGram (accessible at http://books.google.com/ngrams) is a corpus of around 4% of all books ever published, and around 500 billion words. Because it is comprised of books with dates of publication, it is diachronic, and can track the prominence of words over time. The NGram's claim to academic robustness is that its corpus is so enormous (it would take a human several lifetimes to read) that it contains a reasonable sample of everything ever written. It has been found by linguists to be extremely robust. See B. Michael *et al*, 'Quantitative Analysis of Culture Using Millions of Digitized Books', *Sciencexpress* (2010), pp.1-12. In Figure 5.7 above, the Y-axis corresponds to the total percentage of the NGram corpus taken up by the word in question. The numbers on the axis are relatively unimportant: the NGram's power is that it enables us to compare different words with each other over time, rather than measure frequency precisely.

How, then, should we regard these findings? While the discovery that the Edwardian period did not see an explosion of the language of class in electoral politics is interesting, it should arguably not be taken as clinching evidence to support the claim of Lynch, MacDonald, and Griffiths that class was a comparatively unimportant aspect of political rhetoric.[91] This is because we are limited in the above analysis to simply comparing one election with another. That the scores for elections during 1906-1910 are lower than for 1885 and 1895 could simply indicate that the language of class became prominent much sooner than historians generally believe. However, a more convincing reading is that class was simply an unstable part of the language of electoral politics; almost as unstable, in fact, as issues like Home Rule, or the House of Lords, which could precipitate a gale in one contest but only a slight zephyr in the next. The fact that the frequency of 'class' tripled from a period low in 1880 to a period high just five years later in 1885 powerfully demonstrates this volatility and elasticity. This clearly should encourage us to reject the idea that a linear growth in underlying class feeling in society gradually permeated the language of electoral politics, and to view class as a rhetorical resource which could be attached to ideas, issues, and appeals. The evidence from the Edwardian period does not suggest that the New Liberalism's rhetorical swordplay – or its opponents' parries – made more use of this resource than their predecessors from previous decades had done.

* * *

The last aspect of the New Liberalism this chapter will investigate is the extent to which the party's appeal in 1906-14 effectively contained the challenge of Labour. Given that Labour only contested 50 seats in 1906, 78 in January 1910, and 56 in December 1910 – and invariably finished last in three-cornered fights right up until 1914 – it is easy to argue that they were weak, and in no real position to challenge the Liberals in the general election expected in 1915.[92] Historians have characterised Labour candidates in 1906 and 1910 as 'little more than Liberal surrogates' (Blewett) and 'Liberalism's reserve army' (Tanner).[93] Indeed, the view that Labour generally offered little that was new was shared by Robert Spence Watson, chairman of the National Liberal Federation (NLF), who wrote in October 1906: 'I very much doubt that there is any breach whatever between the Labour and Liberal parties...I do not think there is any reason to suppose that Labour, speaking generally, is drifting further away from Liberalism'.[94] However, the psephological data may disguise what Labour might have achieved if

[91] Lynch, *Liberal Party*, pp.219-225; MacDonald, 'Locality, Tradition and Language', p.67; Griffiths, *Lancashire Working Classes*, pp.318-9.

[92] D. Tanner, 'Class Voting and Radical Politics: the Liberal and Labour parties, 1910-31', in J. Lawrence and M. Taylor, (eds.) *Party, State and Society: Electoral Behaviour in Britain since 1820* (Aldershot, 1997), p.112; R. Douglas, 'Labour in decline 1910-14', in Brown, (ed.), *Essays in anti-Labour History*, pp. 105-25; P. Clarke, 'The Electoral Position of the Liberal and Labour parties, 1910-1914', *English Historical Review* (1975), pp.828-36.

[93] Blewett, *Peers*, p.109; Tanner, *Labour Party*, pp.284-313. See also Clarke, *Lancashire*, p.360, 376; Russell, *Liberal Landslide*, p.81, 203.

[94] *The Times*, 18 Oct 1906.

– as seemed overwhelmingly likely – their electoral ambition expanded beyond the modest 56 candidates they managed to field in December 1910.[95] There may have been – as Matthew, McKibbin, and Kay have argued – 'a latent Labour vote in the pre-war electorate' which could have been mobilized if more candidates had stood, and if the franchise was widened to include the portion of the working class still excluded.[96] Indeed, Labour's ability to immediately secure strong third-place performances in constituencies they had never before contested in either general or by-elections should encourage us to take seriously the idea that candidates in 1906 and 1910 had a distinct appeal, and a distinct platform message, which made them a considerable potential threat to Liberalism regardless of the war.[97]

Using the corpus to investigate the extent to which Labour forwarded a distinct message in these elections is challenging, not least because East Anglia featured only one candidate. However, we can make some potentially important initial observations simply by comparing the language of national speakers during the 1906-1910 period for all three parties. This is an imperfect exercise, because Labour speeches – as might be imagined given the party's junior status – were far less common and more scantily reported in the mainstream national press. However, it is still possible to compile a corpus of 25,000 words from *The Times* for the years 1906-1910, from which we can gain some useful insights.[98] Using the concordance software, we can perform an automatic keyword generation using reference corpora: in other words, the program compares the Labour corpus against each sub-corpus for national Liberals and Unionists for each of these three elections, and flags 'Labour keywords' which appear significantly more often[99]. This technique allows us to shed light empirically on what was distinct about Labour's national message relative to those of Liberalism and Unionism. Appendix 5.2 contains a full numerical breakdown, but the fourteen most distinct keywords of interest are shown in Figures 5.7 and 5.8 below.[100]

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[95] McKibbin has estimated that Labour would have fielded between 125-170 candidates in an election in 1914-15. See McKibbin, *Labour Party*, pp.72-77.

[96] H. Matthew, R. McKibbin, J. Kay, 'The Franchise Factor in the Rise of the Labour Party', *English Historical Review* (1976), p.740.

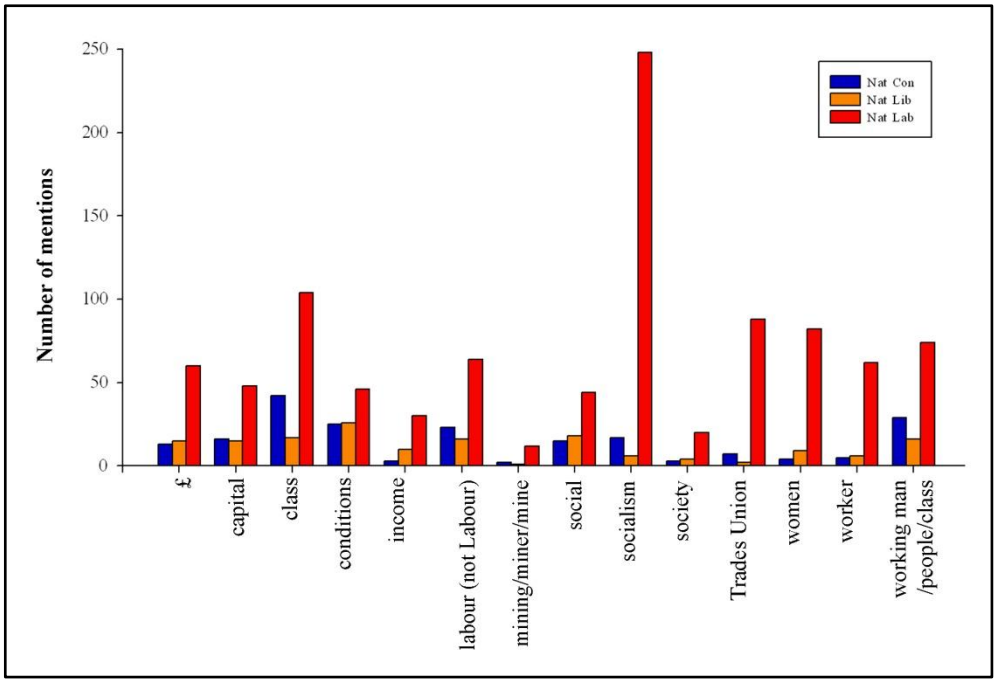
[97] Readman and Blaxill, 'Edwardian By-Elections' (forthcoming).

[98] This corpus was compiled from *The Times*, and features every speech reported from a public meeting from 1 Jan 1906 to 31 Dec 1910. Note that this naturally includes speeches which were not made during general elections, so is not a perfect like-for-like comparison with the Conservative and Liberal national corpora.

[99] See Technical Glossary entry from 'Reference Corpus'.

[100] The keywords qualified as distinct by appearing more often in the Labour 1906-10 corpus than for the national Unionists and Liberals combined in these years. The above Unionist and Liberal scores are, of course, averaged between these three general elections to enable an easy comparison, but it is singular that each of the fourteen Labour keywords also appeared more often than in each of the Conservative or Liberal sub-corpora in 1906, January 1910, or December 1910, as Appendix 5.2 demonstrates. Each Labour keyword shown above has thus emerged through exceeding (usually substantially) six different comparators, suggesting that we can lean fairly heavily on the results despite the relatively small size of the Labour corpus.

Lemma	NAT CON	NAT LIB	NAT LAB
£	13	15	60
Capital	16	15	48
Class	42	17	104
Conditions	25	26	46
Income	3	10	30
labour (not inc. 'Labour')	23	16	64
Mining/miner/mine	2	1	12
Social	15	18	44
Socialism	17	6	248
Society	3	4	20
Trades Union	7	2	88
Women	4	9	82
Worker	5	6	62
Working man/people/class	29	16	74
Total	**204**	**161**	**982**



Figures 5.7 and 5.8: Labour National Speakers, 1906-1910

See Appendix 5.2. Table and Graph to show the most distinct Labour keywords 1906-1910. Each word qualified by appearing more often in the Labour corpus than in both the Liberal and Conservative corpora combined. Note that the Conservative and Liberal entries displayed here are the averaged scores for the three elections 1906-1910. All readings, as usual, are weighted to 50,000 words each.

The most immediately striking keyword is 'Socialism'. While it is not surprising that Labour should mention it more often, the degree is remarkable. Even Conservative speakers – keen to label their Liberal opponents, and especially the People's Budget, 'Socialistic' – only mentioned Socialism a tenth of the number of times. When Unionists did use the term, however, it was designed to hit hard, such as when Lord Curzon condemned the Budget as 'an insidious and a revolutionary measure...the proposals contained in it are tainted with Socialism'.[101] For Labour speakers, however, the term was simply an everyday rhetorical staple, indicating a fundamental difference in core party vocabulary. Most of the other Labour keywords are fairly intuitive: speakers mentioned Trades Unions, mining, workers, and working conditions considerably more often than did Liberals or Unionists. Significantly, they were also much more likely to mention 'class', and to emphasise unearned income, and capitalism. While Harry Quelch contended that 'their business as a Labour Party was to increase the political power of the working classes, and not that of the capitalists', most speakers were much less antagonistic.[102] Keir Hardie (whose speeches account for a sizeable chunk of the Labour corpus) was harsh on capitalism – which 'had left its slimy trail over the lives of men in all parts of the world' – but did not attempt to use class to ignite an aggressive material appeal. In fact, he repeatedly stressed the need for the party to defeat class interest, arguing that 'Socialism is not a class movement' and that Labour's mission was to 'rescue the people' from 'the servile acquiescence in class Government'.[103] This further supports Lawrence's argument that Labour considered their own message on class to be fundamentally more inclusive than the antagonistic version their opponents supposedly espoused.[104] However, despite generally eschewing a strong material appeal to class – and despite being closer to the Liberal than the Unionist score on all fourteen keywords – Figures 5.7 and 5.8 suggest that it is difficult to agree with Bernstein's view that 'at a national level...there was little obvious distinction between Liberal and Labour.'[105]

Indeed, one keyword perhaps worthy of special mention is 'women', which was mentioned 82 times by national Labour speakers, and practically ignored by their opponents. The vast majority (around three-quarters) of the contexts concerned suffrage. Although by no means a matter of complete agreement within the Labour Party in these years, most speakers supported it strongly. Hardie contended in 1907 that 'so long as women were held to be inferior to men they could not expect to have that comradeship in the great labour movement which they all desired to see' and in 1908 Victor Grayson declared that 'women did not want the vote for selfish reasons, but they realized the shocking lot of many of their sex, and saw that each night there were 86,000 women and girls selling body and soul on the streets of London.'[106] In Norwich, a similar situation was in evidence in

[101] *The Times*, 18 Dec 1909.

[102] *The Times*, 28 Jan 1907.

[103] *The Times*, 25 Jan 1907.

[104] Lawrence, *Speaking for the People*, pp. 144, 265-66.

[105] Bernstein, 'Liberalism and the Progressive Alliance', p.638.

[106] *The Times*, 18 Jan 1907; 23 Jan 1908.

miniature, with women mentioned at Labour meetings fourteen times in these years, to the Liberals' five and the Unionists' two (see Appendix 5.3). George Roberts (the Norwich Labour candidate) explained that 'he mentioned women as well as men because they had women who were rendering splendid service in the work appertaining to his candidature.'[107] This comparatively high level of attention given to women by Labour also casts doubt on the relatively common assumption that the pre-war mainstream Labour Party was necessarily an overwhelmingly male-centric organ which – according to Graves' study – 'spoke primarily for the interests of workers in craft and industrial unions in which women...had only minimal representation'.[108] Lawrence has also argued that 'the language of Labour's politics was overtly "masculinist"'.[109] While both historians are right to point out that women enjoyed limited access to mainstream Labour politics, this evidence does not necessarily mean that male speakers ignored women or (perhaps more accurately) ignored them rather less than did Unionists and Liberals.

This analysis certainly shows Labour had a distinct message, but it is weakened by the fact that it is confined to the national stage, and that approximately half of the Labour corpus is comprised of speeches not made during general election campaigns, where different issues may have been emphasised. To strengthen this analysis, the logical next step is to examine grassroots speeches in a similar manner, using Norwich and the candidature of George Roberts as a case-study. Although Roberts was something of an idiosyncratic character on the right of the Labour Party (switching parties twice after the war) he was well-regarded within the party and received strong backing from the Labour Representation Committee in all three contests.[110] Norwich also featured three-cornered fights in each Edwardian election, and allows us to compile a respectably-sized corpus (22,500 words per party) for the 1906-1910 period.[111] Using the concordance software in the same manner as above, we can empirically uncover the Norwich Labour keywords. The results can be seen in full in Appendix 5.3, but Figure 5.9 below summarises the results:

Norwich Labour: Keywords mentioned twice as often (or more) than Liberals				
capital	labour	nationalisation	valuation	working
church	land	railway	wage	
factory	landlord	religion	women	
human	markets	social	worker	

[107] *Eastern Evening News*, 13 Jan 1906.

[108] P. Graves, *Labour Women: women in British working class politics, 1918-1939* (Cambridge, 1994), pp.7-15.

[109] Lawrence, *Speaking for the People,* pp.158-9.

[110] H. Tracey, rev. M. Brodie, *Oxford Dictionary of National Bibliography* entry for G.D.H. Roberts.

[111] This special corpus simply consists of 7,500 words of speech for each Norwich party at each of the three elections, so 22,500 words for the 1906-1910 period.

Norwich Labour: Keywords mentioned twice as often (or more) than Unionists				
church	income	poverty	tax	women
factory	land	railway	valuation	worker
human	landlord	social	wage	

Figure 5.9: Labour in Norwich, 1906-1910

See Appendix 5.3.

Figure 5.9 and Appendix 5.3 suggest that the vocabulary of Labour in Norwich was also distinct from that of the Unionists and the Liberals. However, they also suggest some important similarities and differences between national and grassroots Labour speakers during these years. The similarities are that 'worker', 'social', and 'labour' (with a small 'l') again emerged as keywords, mentioned by Roberts more than twice as often as both opposing parties. Additionally, Labour enjoyed a similar lead over the Liberals on the word 'capital' and in references to working people, and over the Unionists for 'income' and 'capital'. There are also several new words that appear for Norwich ('nationalisation', 'poverty', and 'human') which build upon what might be classed as a traditional Labour appeal, and might be expected from a candidate who described his fight as 'a workers' battle' and 'the worker's cause' and asked the electors to 'make way...let each man stand by his neighbour and the thunder of our footsteps shall roll through the world in the march of the men of Labour'.[112] However, Roberts by no means simply imported a monolithic rhetoric of the national Labour Party into Norwich. Although he mentioned 'class' more often than his opponents, his score (34) was lower than the national Labour speakers as a proportion of the relative corpus sizes.[113] More strikingly, he sidelined Trades Unionism and Socialism, with just 3 and 21 mentions respectively: just a tiny fraction of the national scores. Conversely, his opponents emphasised both– citing them over twice as often. The Unionist Snowden referred to Labour as 'raving Socialists' in January 1910, while the Liberals were at pains to defend Labour's political principles: Louis Tillett argued in 1906 that 'no one was the worse for being a Socialist... Socialists were just as entitled to their opinions as Liberals were...the only difference between them might be the one horse might go a little faster than the other...but they were both going in the same direction'.[114]

The difference between Labour's national and local languages perhaps indicates that Roberts pragmatically adapted his presentation of the Labour Party and Socialism for his Norwich audience, although his own views – as someone on the right of the party – may also have moderated his tone. Unsurprisingly, some of the watchwords of his national leaders – who could speak in more detached

[112] *Eastern Evening News*, 13 Jan 1906.

[113] Roberts mentioned 'class' roughly one word in a thousand, whereas the national Labour speakers mentioned it two words in a thousand.

[114] *Norwich Argus*, 15 Jan 1910; *Eastern Evening News*, 11 Jan 1906.

and ideological terms to audiences of the converted – became albatrosses in the cut and thrust of a constituency election fight. However, Roberts did not just adapt by avoiding problematic subjects, for he was also keen to establish a strong local appeal which arguably went some way beyond the efforts of his opponents.[115] He championed local industrial interests – what he called the 'great and growing industry of Norwich' – by mentioning railways and factories 34 times to negligible reply from either opposing party.[116] He also raised land, landowning, and valuation a combined total of 70 times (compared to 25 and 17 for the Unionists and Liberals respectively), which was also a critical local interest in an agricultural city like Norwich.[117] Finally, he paid considerably more attention to issues of Christianity, church, and religion (46 combined mentions compared to 15 for the Unionists and just 3 for Liberals) which were also central to Norwich's political culture.[118] Overall, despite running on an unofficial joint-ticket with the Liberal candidate in each contest, Roberts' language was hardly that of a Liberal reserve or surrogate. He retained important elements of Labour's distinct national message, and also added important local valances which his opponents neglected. Even though Norwich Liberal candidates like Tillett were keen – like Spence Watson at the NLF – to emphasise the points of unity in the respective progressive platforms, their Unionist opponents were naturally at pains to exploit them. Wild declared them 'diametrically opposed to each other' and mocked the 'amorous advances' towards the 'Labour honeysuckle' by the 'Liberal Bee'.[119] This is not to argue that the progressive alliance had no effect in unifying the respective Labour and Liberal platforms in Norwich, or the national stage. Indeed, if constituency candidates were not allied, then the respective campaigns might well have been still more distinct: in Middlesbrough in 1906, the absence of a joint-ticket quickly caused the Labour and Liberal candidates (and visiting speakers) to be at loggerheads.[120]

There were also – on the national stage, and in Norwich – important issues which Labour emphasised considerably less than their opponents. 'Reform' was one: it was mentioned by national speakers 38 times, versus an average of 67 for the Liberals and 103 for the Unionists during 1906-1910. In Norwich, the Labour score was 22 as compared with 72 and 52 for their respective opponents. A second was foreign policy: on the national stage, Labour did not mention the lemma 'foreign' at all, while their opponents registered 31 and 43 mentions, and in Norwich, these scores were 11 (Labour) and 22 and 28 (Liberals and Unionists). The third – Irish Home Rule – received 11 mentions from Labour in Norwich and on the national stage combined, versus equivalents of 94 and 157 by their respective opponents. It is always difficult for a historian to account for why things *were not* mentioned, but the absence of these terms could reflects Labour's status: the party entertained no

[115] Lawrence has also argued that local concerns were also a particularly important part of Labour platforms elsewhere. See Lawrence, *Speaking for the People*, pp.227-263.

[116] *Eastern Evening News*, 29 Nov 1910.

[117] See Chapter Two, pp.62-3, for a more thorough discussion of Norwich's agricultural connection.

[118] See Doyle, 'Politics and middle class culture in Norwich', passim.

[119] *Norwich Argus*, 3 and 10 Jan 1906.

[120] A. Purdue, 'George Lansbury and the Middlesbrough election of 1906', *International Review of Social History* (1973), pp.346-9.

immediate aspirations of government, and so reforming laws, and dealing with foreign policy and the Irish question were naturally less of a priority for a junior opposition party whose main message was domestic, and focussed on broader ideas and criticisms of the polity.

Overall, whilst the progressive alliance might successfully have co-ordinated electoral efforts in 1906 and 1910 and kept Labour in thrall to Liberalism, the extent to which the alliance similarly contained and subordinated the *image* of Labour – and thus much of their future electoral appeal – has perhaps been overstated by historians. Tanner has suggested that there were chinks in Liberal armour beginning to show by 1914, and that Labour developed a 'positive but limited appeal during the war'.[121] Lawrence has gone further, stressing the idea that Labour speakers saw themselves as educators of public opinion, and ultimately trendsetters– not so much through appealing to class, but through their democratic ideas and novel conception of society and community.[122] Bernstein also demonstrates that quite fundamental disagreement and antagonism was brewing at a municipal level beneath what seemed like a united electoral front in Norwich.[123] Indeed, that Labour offered something new even in 1906 seems apparent through a glance at Russell's election address analysis: the top four issues (working class parliamentary representation, Taff Vale, unemployment, and Old Age Pensions) are not in either the Unionist or Liberal *top ten*.[124] While Tanner, Clarke – and indeed Herbert Gladstone himself – were correct to highlight the immediate effect of the progressive alliance in reinforcing the Liberal electoral position, the pages of F.W.S. Craig perhaps hide as much as they reveal.[125] They disguise the extent to which the development of Labour's image may have outpaced their sluggish electoral ascent, giving them the relatively reliable ability not so much to destroy, but cripple, Liberal candidates when they engaged them in three-cornered contests. Indeed, in the eighteen comparable by-elections fitting this description between 1903 and 1914, the average Conservative vote rose by 0.6%, while that of the Liberals declined by a generally fatal 18.8%.[126] Labour's reliable ability, especially after 1911, to take a large chunk of the Liberal vote – even in places they had not previously contested – may be some testimony to a party image which was both distinct from Liberalism, and potentially dangerous to it even before the war.

* * *

Overall, this section has found relatively little evidence to support the central contention of Clarke *et al* that the New Liberalism represented a dynamic new appeal, or that it was able to harness the language of class to frustrate the rise of Labour. While the counter of Searle, Lynch, Bentley, Sykes

[121] Tanner, *Labour Party*, p.78; 'Class Voting', p.113.

[122] Lawrence, *Speaking for the People*, pp.262-3.

[123] Bernstein, 'Liberalism and the Progressive Alliance', pp. 618-24, 638-40.

[124] Russell, *Liberal Landslide*, p.65, 79, 83.

[125] Tanner, *Labour Party*, p.313; Clarke, *Lancashire*, p. 376.

[126] Readman and Blaxill, 'Edwardian By-Elections' (forthcoming).

and others that the New Liberalism was seldom in evidence in language underestimates the Edwardian Liberal Party's appeal to social reform which – especially in January 1910 – easily eclipsed their Victorian predecessors and their Unionist opponents, this emerging 'New Liberal' image was nevertheless crowded out by other hot-button issues of the day: Chinese Labour, the House of Lords, Tariff Reform, and even Home Rule. On the question of class, it seems difficult to argue that it was exploited by Edwardian Liberals any more than by their Victorian predecessors, even though there was an increasing emphasis on the *working* classes. Indeed, a sizeable minority of the occasions 'class' was raised by Edwardian Liberals or Conservatives also consisted of appeals to defeat, or deflate, class tensions. For their part, the Liberals mentioned class consistently less often than Unionists, and – perhaps more significantly – Labour. The challenge from the left was perhaps more manifest than historians such as Tanner, Blewett, Clarke, and Russell have allowed. Labour forwarded a political language in Norwich and on the national stage that seemed distinct from Liberalism, and was thus a potential danger to it in 1915 if organisational and financial problems could be overcome. This is not to argue that Labour's post-war rise was anything other than improbable even in 1914, but that Edwardian political discourse was – despite the operation of the progressive alliance – increasingly a three-way war of words and ideas rather than a two-way exchange.

IV

Tariff Reform

Tariff Reform undoubtedly divided Unionism throughout the country in 1906: 40% of candidates sided with Chamberlain, 55% with Balfour, and 3% ran as 'Free-Fooders'.[127] Historians agree that the split was electorally damaging, and some even see it as the main cause of defeat.[128] In East Anglia, as Appendix 5.1 shows, the Unionists were split ten-six in favour of Chamberlain, with Gibson-Bowles also fighting his own party as an independent at King's Lynn. But were these East Anglian Balfourites able to sideline Tariff Reform successfully and campaign principally on other issues such as Home Rule, as Windscheffel and Clarke have suggested they sometimes managed in London and Lancashire?[129] Figure 5.10 below – which displays the visibility of Tariff Reform and Free Trade during 1906-10 – suggests not:

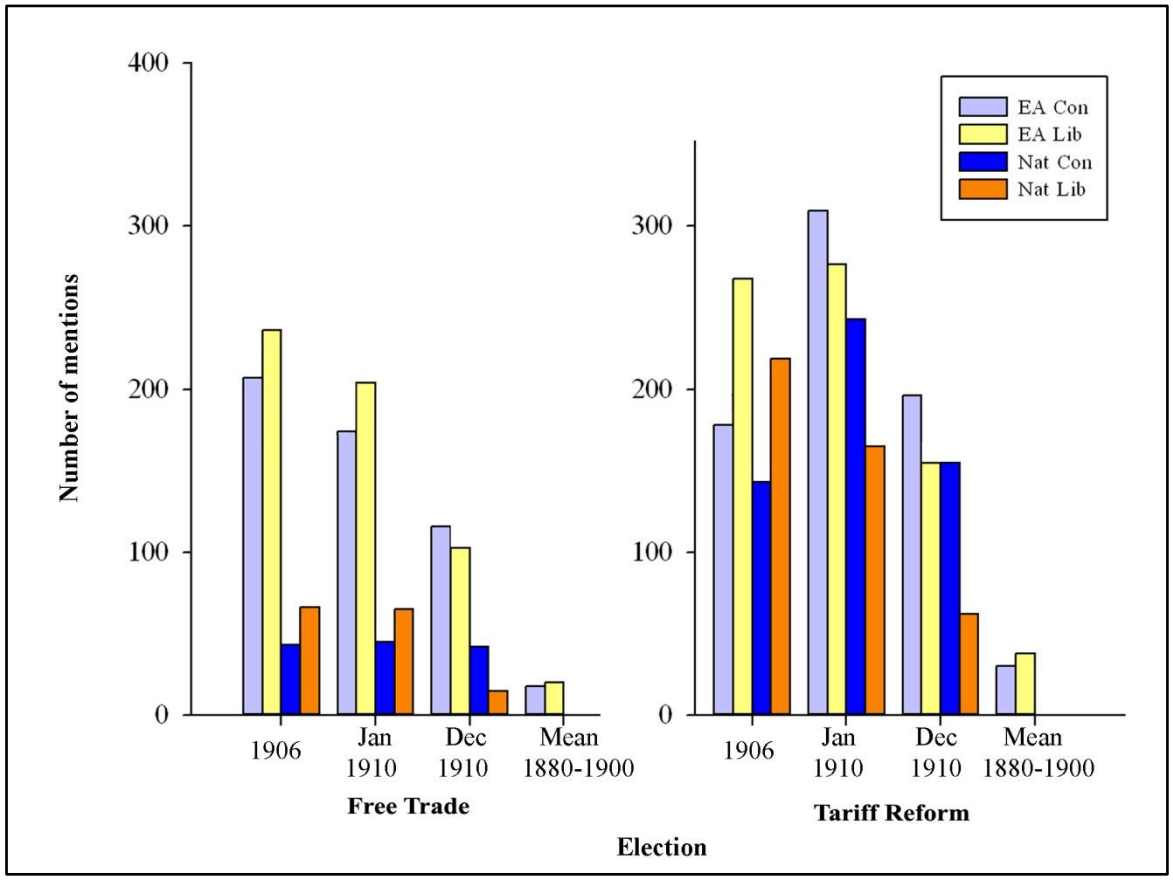


Figure 5.10: Tariff Reform and Free Trade, 1906-1910

See Appendix 5.5A and 5.5B.

[127] Russell, *Liberal Landslide*, p.88.

[128] See n.42 above.

[129] Clarke, *Lancashire*, pp.372-3; Windscheffel, *Popular Conservatism*, pp.198-9.

Figure 5.10 shows that in 1906, East Anglian Unionists raised Tariff Reform 196 times, compared with the Liberals' 268. Free Trade scored a roughly symmetrical 172 and 211 respective hits. On both issues combined, the East Anglian parties averaged 424 mentions each: a score only slightly below that of Irish Home Rule in 1886, or the Boer War in 1900.[130] As Figure 5.2 above showed, this made the fiscal question the premier issue in East Anglia, and also nationally. This storm was so intense that individual candidates were unable to insulate themselves: every speech in the corpus – including all those of Balfourites – dwelt on the fiscal question. However, Tariff Reform was a strangled electoral cry: only 25% of mentions were clearly positive, with 52% being expressions of ambivalence, doubt, or defence.

The speeches themselves strongly reaffirm this strife and confusion. The Conservative *Norwich Argus* admitted that Edward Mann (South-Norfolk) held 'a somewhat anomalous position...he professes himself a Free Trader...but is in favour of many tariffs' while A.H. Burgoyne (King's Lynn) pronounced himself a 'supporter of Balfour and Chamberlain, which is really one and the same'.[131] Rayond Boileau (East-Norfolk) declared that 'he wanted not Protection, but defensive tactics' and Walter Guinness (Stowmarket) professed himself confused that 'the Radicals had tried to make out that it was a question between Protection and Free Trade...in this country he thought we were all Free Traders'.[132] Francis Hervey (Bury) recited an anecdote about a bath which was as revealing as it was amusing:

'Mr. Chamberlain had taken off his clothes, and had gone into the bath. Mr. Balfour had taken his clothes off, and had gone half way down into the water. He [Hervey] had gone into the water with Mr. Chamberlain and there were a good many more who were at the present moment shivering on the bank, and it would be a very good thing if somebody came behind them and pushed them in.'[133]

As well as indicating confusion, Unionist language was defensive: Edward Wild's Norwich election address declared (in bold) '**I am no Protectionist**'. Protectionism – as Trentmann has demonstrated – had been relegated to the status of a universal bogey since the 1860s, or, as an Ipswich speaker vividly put it: 'forty years ago Lord Beaconsfield said Protection was dead; surely today it stinketh'.[134] Conservatives – with their historic links to Protection – had thus regularly been at pains to avoid the issue: in the last six elections, East Anglian Unionists mentioned it an average of five times per contest (compared to fourteen for the Liberals) and on no occasion praised it, or advocated it.

The corresponding political insurmountability of Free Trade, and its status as a dogma, thus played heavily to the Liberals' advantage in 1906, and they emphasised the fiscal question more often

[130] See Appendix 3.1 and 4.2.

[131] *Norwich Argus*, 13 Jan 1906.

[132] *Norfolk Chronicle*, 13 Jan 1906; *Stowmarket Post*, 11 Jan 1906.

[133] *Stowmarket Post*, 11 Jan 1906.

[134] *Norwich Argus*, 13 Juan 1906; *East Anglian Daily Times*, 12 Jan 1906; Trentmann, *Free Trade Nation*, pp.33-80.

both in East Anglia and nationally. Unsurprisingly, the spectre of 'Protectionism' itself was a favourite target, to which Liberal speakers put the rhetorical boot in to the tune of 173 uniformly scathing mentions to 47 generally defensive or uncertain replies. For Cobbold (Ipswich) Protection was a 'nightmare', for Everett, a 'peril', and for a Norwich speaker, an evil the Liberals 'were going to smash'.[135] Liberals made use of the classic 'big and little loaf' appeal, but also made powerful material arguments to local interest groups dependent on articles which might be taxed: herrings in Yarmouth, shipping in Lowestoft, footwear in Norwich, and 'the hungry homes of the farmers of Norfolk...[which] were the first to petition for Free Trade' were all singled out.[136] These attacks echoed Lloyd George, who told a northern audience that 'Protection would spell ruin to the textile industries of Lancashire and close the workshops on the Tyne and the Tees'.[137]

One potentially popular chord which Tariff Reform might have struck was its appeal to Empire. Indeed, the development of close commercial ties to bind the mother country more closely to her colonies was arguably Chamberlain's foremost motivation when he proposed his policy, which he initially christened 'imperial preference' rather than Tariff Reform.[138] For Andrew Thompson, this important imperial dimension has been largely overlooked by the majority of accounts.[139] Indeed, Appendix 4.10 lends some weight to Thompson's argument, for it shows that East Anglian and national Conservatives continued to prioritise Empire into the Edwardian period (especially in 1906). Hervey described himself as 'a follower of that great colonial statesman, Mr. Chamberlain' and even the Balfourite Wild declared that a general measure of Tariff Reform was 'a policy which would...consolidate the British Empire'.[140] Boileau, meanwhile, claimed simply that 'he was an imperialist and a big Englander, and wanted to see the colonies bound more closely to their mother country'.[141]

This renewed appeal to Empire may well have stemmed at least in part, from Chamberlain's faith in the popularity of Imperialism as an electoral appeal which seemed to have been well-demonstrated in 1900.[142] However, Chamberlain perhaps misread the public's exhaustion with the South African war which had dragged on until 1902. Liberals increasingly exploited this exhaustion to forge a new language of patriotism which focussed on the good life at home in Britain rather than energetic Imperialism abroad.[143] Beauchamp (Lowestoft) believed that 'they heard a lot, probably too

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[135] *East Anglian Daily Times*, 3and 12 Jan 1906; *Eastern Evening News*, 13 Jan 1906.

[136] *East Anglian Daily Times*, 12 Jan 1906; *Eastern Evening News*, 6 Jan 1906, 4 Jan 1910.

[137] *The Times*, 1 Jan 1906.

[138] Marsh, *Entrepreneur*, pp.583-6.

[139] A. Thompson, 'Tariff Reform: an Imperial Strategy, 1903-1913', *Historical Journal* (1997), pp.1034-5, 1053-4.

[140] *Stowmarket Post*, 11 Jan 1906; *Norwich Argus*, 6 Jan 1906.

[141] *Eastern Evening News*, 20 Jan 1906.

[142] Green, 'Radical Conservatism', pp.667-92, 686-8; Jay, *Joseph Chamberlain*, pp.301-2; Judd, *Radical Joe*, pp.241-2; Garvin and Amery, *The Life of Joseph Chamberlain*, vol. XI, p.795; Marsh, *Entrepreneur*, p.626.

[143] P. Readman, 'The Liberal Party and Patriotism in early Twentieth Century Britain', *20th Century British History* (2001), pp.300-1; *Land and Nation*, pp.34-5.

much, of the word “imperial”. He thought all in that room where one sense imperialists, [but] he did not agree with Mr Chamberlain in his interpretation and application of the word...if our Empire was to be maintained, young people must be trained to temperance, thrift, manliness, and honesty'.[144] For the Yarmouth clergyman, Reverend Guttery, 'the man in Birmingham was once more attempting to hold aloft the tattered flag of prostituted patriotism, and was a mere echo of the madness which had once deluded the nation, madness that they would be very glad to forget'. He went on to describe:

'Two types of patriotism. There was the patriotism such as their fathers knew...the patriotism that was willing to tell England if need be, unpopular truths, the patriotism that was ready to work, suffer...to widen the bounds of liberty and to win the people a good life (Cheers). And there was the patriotism of swagger, the boasting and blatancy, the patriotism of the stock exchange, the patriotism of Park Lane, the patriotism that...could not shout "rule Britannia" except with a beery hick-up.'[145]

These Liberal refutations of the Unionists' brand of imperial patriotism in many ways echoed their message of 1900, and reflected a concerted attempt by the party to reassert their patriotic credentials (indeed, East Anglian speakers mentioned the lemma 'patriot' 25 times in 1906, and their Unionist opponents only twice). Perhaps the Unionists' – and Chamberlain's – mistake after 1900 was to assume that a robust imperial appeal would automatically allow them to retain the mantle of the patriotic party. If so, they were mistaken. Tariff Reform *did* place Empire prominently on the agenda in 1906, but this time it failed to trump their opponent's counter-claim to patriotism. Empire had been a winning appeal in 1900, but the contest six years later perhaps underlined its limitations as a universal Unionist electoral weapon.

The righteous tone of the Liberal assault on Protectionism and 'prostituted patriotism', the anecdotes of 'the hungry forties' under the Corn Laws, the famous vivid Liberal Publication Department posters such as 'Save the Children from Tariff Reform' and 'Trusts for the Rich, Crusts for the Poor', and the material appeal to Suffolk and Norfolk stomachs and livelihoods were perhaps reflective of the greatest advantage Tariff Reform bequeathed to the Liberals in 1906. As Bentley has put it, 'it removed the need to think'.[146] The visceral and simple nature of the Liberal Free Trade message had what the intellectual 'faddism' of the 1890s fatally lacked: an appeal to passion. It was now the Liberals, as Trentmann describes, whose popular appeal drew on the exhibitionism that was previously a Tory forté: horseflesh sausage displays, didactic circus acts in seaside towns like Lowestoft and Yarmouth, and Free Trade song parties.[147] The Liberal pantomime also had a clear villain in Chamberlain – the man Lloyd George described as 'the raging bull from

[144] *East Anglian Daily Times*, 2 Jan 1906.

[145] *Yarmouth Mercury*, 13 Jan 1906.

[146] Bentley, *Climax*, p.109. Liberal Publication Department cartoons reproduced in Trentmann, *Free Trade Nation*, plate. iv,v.

[147] Trentmann, *Free Trade Nation*, pp.81-133.

Birmingham...smash[ing] up the great shop of the world' – with Balfour as his comically pathetic subordinate, whom Goddard dismissed as 'the alleged leader who was really a lady help to Mr. Joseph Chamberlain'.[148] Both men were by far the most widely referenced national personalities of the contest: Chamberlain achieved an almost Gladstonian 133 mentions from Liberals (39 from Unionists) and Balfour registered 72 and 47 hits respectively.[149] The national scores were similarly inflated and lopsided, as shown by Appendix 5.7. For Tillett, the duo 'were like the lion and the lamb lying down together...it did not require a great amount of common sense to see that immediately the lamb must go inside the lion'.[150] The humour was widespread, and, critically, one-sided: the corpus shows that the traditionally sober Liberals now evoked more *laughter* from East Anglian audiences by the remarkable margin of 176 hits to 67. This election was indeed rather less of a laughing matter for Unionists than 1900 (where they managed 132 hits) had been, and perhaps further demonstrated that they were now the party lumbered with the complex appeal which ran counter to the zeitgeist. And the evolving tenor of post-reform popular politics suggested that complexity and nuance were luxuries that could extract a high electoral price, as the Liberal faddists a decade ago could testify. Bereft of the patriotic trump-card the war had given them six years previously, the Unionists ended up paying it.

In explaining the role played by the fiscal question in the 1906 landslide, historians have no doubt been right to emphasise the way it respectively unified the Liberals and divided the Unionists, and the simple unpopularity of Protection amongst the working classes. However, the third string to the Liberal bow was arguably that the attack on Tariff Reform and the defence of Free Trade gave the party an appeal to passion and dogma over reason and counter-intuition, and had the opposite reciprocal effect on the Unionists. Indeed, many Conservatives also felt that the moral and humanitarian Liberal outcry over Chinese Labour was a similarly cheap and emotive appeal to base passion.[151] When this is placed alongside Readman's important argument on the strength of the emerging 'domestic' Liberal patriotism after 1902, and Freeden's contention that Edwardian Liberal intellectuals were shedding their instinctive fear of passions in politics, it can be argued that the language of popular Liberalism may have been effective in 1906 for the same reason the Unionists had been in 1900: it appealed to heart above head.[152]

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[148] *The Times*, 1 Jan 1906; *East Anglian Daily Times*, 12 Jan 1906.

[149] See Appendix 5.7 for full scores for the 1906-1910 *dramatis personae*.

[150] *Eastern Evening News*, 18 Jan 1906.

[151] See for example meetings in East Norfolk, *Eastern Evening News*, 20 Jan 1906 and Lowestoft, *East Anglian Daily Times*, 13 Jan 1910. Chinese Labour was also identified as the main cause of defeat by the Suffolk Conservative Herman Biddell in his scathing fifteen-page evaluation of the Woodbridge contest, where he predicted the Liberal victor Robert Lacey Everett would be sent to Hell for his lies from the platform. See H. Biddell, 'Mr. Everett's Victory in the Woodbridge Division: how he won it', pp.5-6, 15 in *Ross' Collection*, Ipswich RO ref: fs324. For more on the electoral potency of the Chinese Labour outcry, see Clarke, *Lancashire*, p.376; Windscheffel, *Popular Conservatism*, p.200; Marsh, *Entrepreneur*, p.630.

[152] Readman, 'The Liberal Party and Patriotism', pp.300-1; *Land and Nation*, pp.34-5; M. Freeden, 'Liberal passions: Reason and Emotion in late- and post-Victorian Liberal thought', in P. Ghosh and L. Goldman (eds.) *Politics and culture in Victorian Britain* (New York, 2006), pp.143-4.

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Whilst this chapter is in general agreement with historians on the damaging impact of Tariff Reform on the Unionist campaign in 1906, it also contends that we should regard the fiscal question in the contests of 1910 as a quite different issue, both in substance and presentation. Clarke and Green have pointed out that Tariff Reform in 1910 was a different policy on paper: a general appeal to Protection rather than a list of specific taxable articles, and – crucially – a means of paying for social reform without the perceived Socialism of the Budget. It also lacked the same imperial dimension now that Chamberlain was *hors de combat*.[153] Finally, the case for Tariff Reform in 1910 was also being made against the national backdrop of considerably higher unemployment compared to four years ago. Despite this important clarification, historians (Clarke and Green included) have seldom differentiated between the merits of the two election cries, and have generally been content to send the Tariff Reform of 1910 to the same electoral chamber of horrors as its more unequivocally disastrous predecessor of 1906.[154] Such a reading is perhaps the principal reason why historians have been so negative in their interpretation of the Unionist campaigns in 1910, which, it should be remembered, in January yielded a national swing of near-comparable magnitude to that which they had sustained in 1906, and saw them recover from their historical nadir of 157 seats to a position of parity. For Green, the January result was 'no cause for optimism', whereas Trentmann argues that the Liberal campaign for Free Trade 'paid off....and limited the swing to the Conservatives'.[155] Blewett goes further, arguing that Tariff Reform had once again been greeted with 'antipathy' by the working classes who had thrice 'rejected the Tory nostrum', while Belchem contends that the campaign consisted of 'wild negativism' which nevertheless 'managed to recoup some support'.[156] Lynch argues that the Liberal decline in the countryside in 1910 (where they were reduced from 109 seats to 56) only occurred as a result of the unprecedented efforts of gentry – energised by the People's Budget – to win the votes of 'habitual abstainers': a strategy which 'over the long run...was unlikely to meet with continued success.'[157] This section will instead support the reinterpretation of Thackeray and contend that the negative effect of Tariff Reform– and the resultant 'crisis' of Conservatism – has been overstated.[158] It will also push this argument further by contending that we can clearly separate the problematic Tariff Reform appeal of

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[153] Clarke, *Lancashire*, p.284, 352; Green *Crisis*, pp.191-3, 206, 244, 260-3.

[154] Blewett, *Peers*, pp.178-9, 407, 413; Green, *Crisis*, pp.267-8; Trentmann, *Free Trade Nation*, pp.81-133; Clarke, *Lancashire*, pp.372-82; Lynch, *Liberal Party*, pp.198-205; Belchem, *Class, Party, and the Political System*, p.31; Pugh, 'Liberals in 1906: Flourishing or Doomed? The Optimistic View', p. 57, *Making of Modern British Politics*, p.105; Charmley, *Conservative Politics*, pp.39, 42-3;Fraser, 'Unionism and Tariff Reform' pp.165-6; Cain, 'Free Trade, Social Reform and Imperialism', pp.208-9; Doyle, 'Politics and Middle Class Culture in Norwich', p.625.

[155] Green, *Crisis*, pp.267-8; Trentman, *Free Trade Nation*, p.130.

[156] Blewett, *Peers*, p. 407; Belchem, *Class, Party, and the Political System*, p.31.

[157] Lynch, *Liberal Party*, pp.202-3.

[158] Thackeray, 'Crisis of Conservatism', pp.194-200. See also Windscheffel, *Popular Conservatism*, pp.204-5; Readman and Blaxill, 'Edwardian By-elections' (forthcoming).

1906 from its politically and linguistically evolved successor in 1910, which on balance could be regarded as more of an electoral success than a failure.

The first point is that the Tariff Reform of 1910 was no longer a divisive issue in East Anglia. As Appendix 5.1 shows, the dissenters of 1906 had been entirely weeded-out, and all seventeen East Anglian candidates in both contests were now Whole-Hoggers who robustly advocated extensive fiscal reform. Suffolk and Norfolk were not exceptional in this regard: Balfour had gradually moved closer to Chamberlain's position in the years after 1906, and the often ruthless grassroots actions of the 'Confederacy' (a wealthy secret society of hardline Tariff Reformers) at a constituency level had virtually eliminated the remaining Free-Fooders by 1909.[159] Indeed, in East Anglia, even Unionists who had supported Balfour in 1906 now toed the party line. Cuthbert Quilter (Sudbury) admitted that while 'he was an old Free Trader...he was now going in for Tariff Reform' and the old Norwich member Samuel Hoare, who had refused to re-contest the city in 1906 on account of the Unionists' fiscal policy, returned as both a candidate and a converted Tariff Reformer, praising the policy's capacity to 'resuscitate and increase our dying native industries, put a check on the importation of foreign manufactured goods, and thus give more work to our own people.'[160] The resolution of the disagreement between Chamberlain and Balfour at the top of the party also removed the Unionist leaders as rhetorical whipping-boys for their opponents: Balfour was mentioned by East Anglian Liberals in January just 27 times and Chamberlain 12, while in December they scored 36 and 8 hits respectively.[161] The shedding of this albatross was arguably particularly important because historians have placed such emphasis on the damage caused by the frontbench tensions – and Chamberlain's obsessive crusade – in 1906.[162] Overall, the Tariff Reform of 1910 was now a virtually unanimous party position and, as such, should not be treated in the same vein as its divisive predecessor.

The second difference between the old and the new Tariff Reform lies in the respective emphasis it received, and the enthusiasm it generated, amongst Unionist speakers. Rather than dropping the policy which appeared to cause electoral disaster four years previously, Unionists in 1910 went on to emphasise it more: in January (as Figure 5.10 shows) they mentioned it 312 times (a 77% increase from 1906) against 273 Liberal counters. National speakers closely followed, registering respective party scores of 243 to 165 (a 70% increase for Unionists). When one also takes into account the readings for Free Trade, it can reasonably be contended that the fiscal question was more mentioned in January 1910 in East Anglia than Home Rule had been in 1886. The resilience of Tariff Reform – and the Unionist commitment to it – is also demonstrated by the fact that it managed to stand out in January 1910: an election sporting a uniquely crowded national agenda (see Figure 5.2 above). Indeed, even in December, Unionists did not use Balfour's referendum pledge to shelve the

[159] Sykes, 'Confederacy', p.365; Witherell, 'Political Cannibalism', p.25.

[160] *East Anglian Daily Times*, 12 Jan 1910; *Norwich Argus*, 14 Jan 1910.

[161] See Appendix 6.

[162] N. Blewett, 'Free-Fooders, Balfourites, Whole-Hoggers. Factionalism within the Unionist Party, 1906-10', *Historical Journal* (1968), pp.95-124. See also Russell, *Liberal Landslide*, pp.204-5; Blewett, *Peers*, pp.120-1; Trentmann, *Free Trade Nation*, p.60, 185; Sykes, 'Confederacy', p.358.

issue as Blewett suggests, but still mentioned it 197 times in East Anglia and 155 times nationally: more often than in 1906.[163] Perhaps still more surprisingly, the Liberal counter-cry of Free Trade – which had matched Tariff Reform in 1906 – now lagged behind: mentions by East Anglian Liberals fell from 225 in 1906, to 202 in January 1910, to 106 in December, and national scores declined from 66, to 65, to 15 respectively. This rather suggests that the Liberal rhetorical strategy of 1910 consisted squarely of an attack on Tariff Reform rather than an explicit defence of Free Trade, when in 1906 their approach was more evenly balanced. Overall, these numbers do not seem to fit with the prevailing view that Tariff Reform continued to be an albatross for Unionists. In the past, issues that were thought to be vote-losers were liable to be dropped by the proposing party and seized upon by the other; such was the case, as we have seen, with pensions in 1900 and 1906 and with Home Rule throughout the 1890s. It was clearly not the case with Tariff Reform in 1910.

Part of the reason for this increased emphasis on Tariff Reform amongst Unionists, as historians have recognised, was the widespread presentation of the policy as an alternative to the perceived 'Socialism' of the Budget.[164] For Kemp 'the only alternative to the Budget proposals was, as Mr. Asquith himself said, Tariff Reform', whereas for Snowden and Thomas Hare (South-West Norfolk) it was simply 'Tariff Reform or Socialism'.[165] Indeed, even the sceptical Duke of Northumberland wrote that 'Protection cannot be worse than Socialism...and as Tariff Reform or Socialism are the only possible alternatives at the moment, I am quite prepared to swallow the former'.[166] Indeed, the 42 references to 'Socialism' by East Anglian Unionists in January 1910 (up from 13 in 1906) was their highest score in the period by some distance. However, the marshalling of Tariff Reform as a counter to the Budget reflected the fact that the disagreement was not so much over whether to implement social reform, but how to pay for the competing programmes. Indeed, Frank Goldsmith (Stowmarket) concluded a speech about Tariff Reform by remarking that 'the Unionist Party were just as anxious to carry out social reforms as Radicals...they believed in State Insurance against sickness and accidents...with regard to the Old Age Pensions, he had always been very anxious, and so had the party, that it should be extended to those people in receipt of parish relief.'[167]. When we also take into account the argument of Clarke that the imperial justification for Tariff Reform was fading in 1910, we can reasonably conclude that Belchem's description of the 'wild negativism' of the Unionist campaign is somewhat unfair.[168]

The change in the tone of Unionist message was also illustrated by their responses to two of the key Liberal attacks of 1906. The first was the description (and physical display) of food items – principally black pumpernickel bread and horseflesh sausages: these were alluded to by Liberals ten

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[163] Blewett, *Peers*, p.177.

[164] Blewett, 'Free-Fooders, Balfourites, Whole-Hoggers', p.120; Charmley, *Conservative Politics*, p.41; Feutchwanger, *Democracy and Empire*, p.290; P. Clarke, 'Peers versus People?', *History Today* (1981), p.27.

[165] *Norfolk Chronicle*, 8 and 15 Jan 1910.

[166] Cited in Blewett, 'Free-Fooders, Balfourites, Whole-Hoggers', p.121.

[167] *Stowmarket Post*, 1 Dec 1910.

[168] Clarke, *Lancashire*, p.352. Clarke is backed up by the corpus: as Appendix 4.10 shows, the visibility of the Empire declined amongst Unionists in 1910 despite the rise in the prominence of Tariff Reform in these contests.

times in 1906 to the Unionists' three. In 1906, Heaton-Armstrong claimed he had visited Germany and 'had seen people who only had meat once in a year...the working classes lived mostly on sausages made of horse, donkey, and dog flesh', while a female speaker in Yarmouth stated that she 'knew that horseflesh was sold on the Continent, and that the poor there ate what we compared to cat's meat'.[169] By 1910, however, the balance of power had shifted: Unionists now mentioned these unappetising foodstuffs 22 times to the Liberals' six in both elections combined. The aim was clearly to debunk the supposed myths: Foster (Lowestoft) described them as 'fairy tales about black bread', Burton (Ipswich) as the 'black bread and horseflesh bogey', and Lord Elcho reminded his audience that 'they would find that the black bread was a luxury'.[170] The most enthusiastic was the Chairman at a South-West Norfolk meeting, who described the tastiness of horseflesh, remarking that 'he had eaten a great many German sausages....he ate many more German sausages than anyone'.[171] Indeed, the superior physical state of the German working man was a surprisingly important theme: a North-Norfolk speaker praised them as 'more fit, and better disciplined' which echoed Austen Chamberlain's description of the Germans as 'better fed, better nourished, and better clothed than workmen at home'.[172] Several speakers also mentioned that they had visited Germany, and Churchman, while rebuking the Liberal 'posters of starving people' on the walls of Ipswich, reported that he 'saw no underfed children' and Captain Peel (Woodbridge) boasted that 'whilst no Tariff Reformer had returned as a Free Trader, many Free Traders had altered their opinions'.[173]

The Liberal assault on the spectre of Protection had also atrophied. From mentioning it 173 times to the Unionists' 47 in 1906, the parties were now level: registering respective scores of 57 to 62 for both 1910 contests combined. While the tone of Liberal mentions were similar to 1906, the Unionists no longer felt obliged to distance themselves from Protection, and none of them stressed – as Wild had done in bold in his Norwich address four years previously – that they did not support it. Churchman argued that 'they were making a mistake of not adopting some sort of Protection for our own industries, whilst other Nations were rapidly advancing as a result', Borwick (Eye) declared that 'by a moderate system of Protection, the lot of the working man would be better, because wages would increase, and unemployment would cease' and a Stowmarket speaker praised the current system of Protection in operation in the cocoa trade and its resultant 'well-housed workmen'.[174] The Unionists were also less afraid of attacking Free Trade: Snowden complained that Britain was 'clinging to Free Trade', A.E.S Clarke (South-West Norfolk) that 'Free Trade...meant cheap luxuries for the rich and cheap wages for the poor', and Guinness (Bury) asked 'if Free Trade was such a good thing how was it that every civilised country in the world and every one of our Colonies was Protectionist?'.[175] Overall, it seemed that by 1910, Protection was no longer necessarily a bogey and Free Trade no longer

[169] *East Anglian Daily Times*, 9 Jan 1906; *Yarmouth Mercury*, 8 Jan 1906.

[170] *East Anglian Daily Times*, 13 Jan 1910; *Evening Star*, 29 Nov 1910.

[171] *Norfolk Chronicle*, 15 Jan 1910.

[172] *Norfolk Chronicle*, 8 Jan 1910; *The Times*, 10 Jan 1910.

[173] *East Anglian Daily Times*, 10 Jan 1910; *Stowmarket Post*, 1 Dec 1910.

[174] *East Anglian Daily Times*, 6 Jan 1910; *Evening Star*, 9 Nov 1910; *Stowmarket Post*, 20 Jan 1910.

[175] *Norfolk Chronicle*, 15 Jan 1910; Eastern Evening News, 30 Nov 1910; *Stowmarket Post*, 13 Jan 1910.

necessarily a sacred cow. This is not to say that Free Trade was not still an asset to the Liberals, or that they did not continue to gain from their attacks on Tariff Reform, but that their opponents now had a set of replies and counter-arguments that they did not possess in 1906 when Protection – along with German horseflesh and black bread – was almost indefensible.

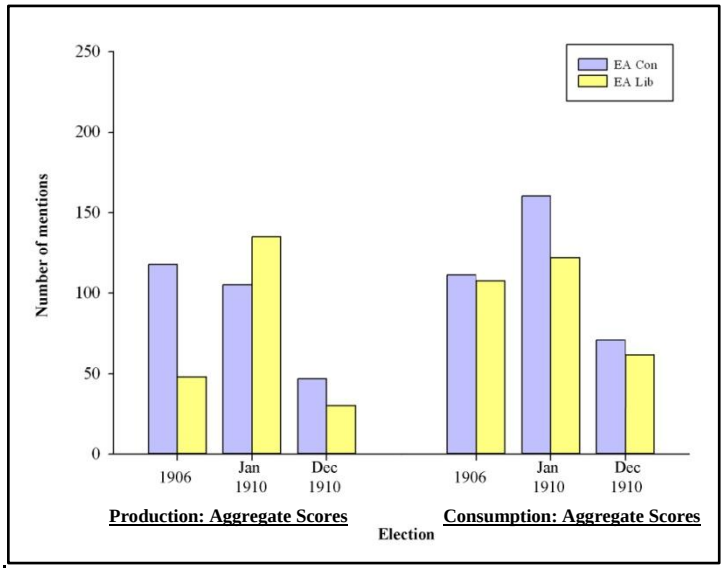
The third and final difference between the Tariff Reform of 1906 and 1910 was arguably its new appeal to consumers as well as producers. Trentmann, Marrison, Sykes, and Irwin have argued that Tariff Reform's main weakness as a populist electoral cry was its emphasis on manufacturers, factories, and industry and its neglect of the much larger numbers who bought and consumed the manufactured articles. Free Trade, by contrast, was easily fashioned into a hard-headed populist appeal to consumers worried about rising prices.[176] This debate has been reopened by Thackeray's recent intervention which – using a range of printed propaganda materials and a study of the Tariff Reform League and Women's Unionist and Tariff Association – argues that Unionists did in fact forward a strong appeal to consumers, especially .[177] However, Thackeray does not engage with election speeches, and this perhaps causes him to underplay the possibility that Tariff Reform's appeal may have changed between elections, and it is notable that the evidence he cites is entirely from after 1906. This arguably demonstrates the distinction between the old Tariff Reform of 1903-6 – which perhaps *was* skewed in favour of producers– and the new Tariff Reform forwarded in 1910 which, as argued below, seemed to have taken long strides to developing a focus on consumers.

Two taxonomies were used to investigate the respective Unionist and Liberal appeals to production and consumption in these elections.[178] The full results are shown in Appendices 5.8A and 5.8B, but the aggregates for East Anglia and the national stage are shown in Figure 5.10 below:

[176] Trentmann, *Free Trade Nation*, pp.69-80; Marrison, *British Business and Protection*; Sykes, *Tariff Reform in British politics* (Oxford, 1979); Irwin, 'The Political Economy of Free Trade'.

[177] Thackeray, 'Crisis of Conservatism', pp.195-200.

[178] The taxonomies used were as follows: for Production, the keywords were 'produce', 'factory', 'industry', and 'manufacture'. For Consumption, the keywords were 'consume', 'bread', 'loaf', 'food', and consumable items ('butter', 'beef', 'eggs', 'milk', 'tobacco', and 'cheese').



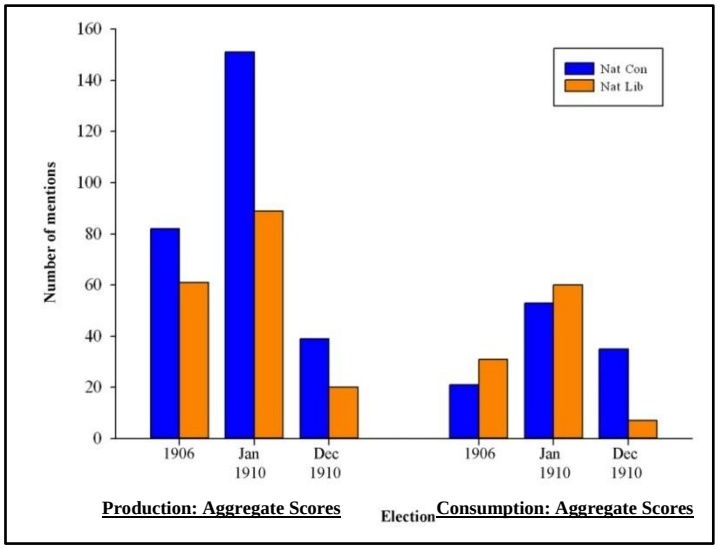


Figure 5.10: Tariff Reform and its emphasis on Production and Consumption

See Appendix 5.8A and 5.8B.

As Figure 5.10 shows, it does indeed seem reasonable to conclude that the Unionist appeal in 1906 was relatively biased towards the producer. In East Anglia, they mentioned factories, industry, and manufacturing 95 times to the Liberals' 40, while the reciprocal scores for bread, loaves, food, and consumable items were 96 to 103, with these trends roughly mirrored on the national stage (albeit at much lower levels). The Liberals also mentioned the particularly important keyword 'food' more than 50% more often. On their own, these scores do not so much suggest that the Unionists lacked an appeal to consumers, but that they did not focus on them *as exclusively* as did their opponents. An example of the limitations of the Unionist appeal in 1906 was arguably provided by Arthur Fell, who made much of the silk tie he wore to Yarmouth meetings, claiming that it was:

'Made by Yarmouth hands and sold by Yarmouth people, and he could not have a better example of the policy now proposed to the country. The silk came from China, and was manufactured in England

and sold in England to Englishman. At present the bulk of the silk goods sold in England are manufactured by Frenchman, Belgians and Germans: an insult to Englishmen. In 1850, 130,000 people were employed in England manufacturing silk. In 1901 there were only 39,000. In 1857 we imported £1,700,000 worth of manufactured silk, in 1903 £13 million worth. In 1860 Coventry made 2,300,000 yards of riband every week, but now its manufacture of ribands was nil.'[179]

While doubtless meritorious as a macro-economic argument, such an appeal was somewhat detached from the consumer, as it did not allude to the price, or attainability, of silk ties (which were, after all, luxury items). Indeed, on the question of prices, the corpus suggests that East Anglian Unionist speakers in 1906 mentioned Pounds (£), Shillings (s.) or pennies (d.) 58 times, compared to 90 for the Liberals, who brought the cost of everyday essentials to the fore. Cobbold (Ipswich) tried to demonstrate his understanding of the Ipswich working man when he sympathetically related that 'the largest item on the balance sheet was for bread and flour at 4s. 6d. a-week, a quarter of his wages...then something was needed for his club, and 1s. 8d. for a Sunday joint.'[180] For Price, Tariff Reform would simply benefit 'the merchants and manufacturers' as 'home producers would raise their prices...who would pay that? The consumer!'[181]

Moving on to January 1910, the readings in Figure 5.10 appear to reverse strikingly. For production, the Unionists more or less retained their 1906 score, but the Liberal statistic – almost entirely on account of their attacks on Tariff Reform – nearly tripled to 133. On consumption, the Conservative aggregate score rose by 42% to 158 (largely on the back of large increases in mentions of bread, food, and consumable items) while the Liberal reading rose only marginally, by 12%, to 121. Whilst these stark trends were not wholly followed on the national stage, both parties nevertheless still doubled their aggregates for the consumer taxonomy compared to 1906. In December, all the scores fell substantially, but the Unionists still retained the lead on consumption, both locally and nationally. The speeches themselves also suggest that Conservatives were, as Thackeray suggests, more reliably forwarding a strong appeal to consumers. Quilter argued that 'he did not believe in taxing some of the few luxuries of the poor people, but rather the luxuries of the rich, and tobacco especially he would exempt from taxation...by broadening the basis of taxation in the way of Tariff Reform they would be able to remove the duties from some of the articles at present largely consumed by the poor'.[182] Foster, meanwhile, tried to reclaim one of the founding fathers of Free Trade, suggesting that 'if Cobden were alive to-day and saw the totally changed condition of things ... and saw that while every other country taxed our goods...we still allowed their goods to come into our markets free, to undersell British labour, and take the food out of the mouths of British workmen...Mr. Cobden would say that the policy

[179] *Yarmouth Mercury*, 6 Jan 1906.

[180] *East Anglian Daily Times*, 12 Jan 1906.

[181] *Eastern Evening News*, 17 Jan 1906.

[182] *East Anglian Daily Times*, 18 Jan 1910.

we were pursuing to-day was not the policy he recommended'.[183] Overall, then, it can reasonably be said that the Unionist appeal to consumers in 1910 was more extensive than it had been in 1906. They by no means necessarily now held the advantage over the Free Traders, but had, once again, rediscovered a populist message that they lacked four years previously.

* * *

This section has argued that we should think of Edwardian Tariff Reform as two distinct policies: the political liability which was presented to the electorate in 1906, and the renewed and rebranded successor which made it at least competitive in 1910. The new Tariff Reform was strengthened in three important ways. First, it was adopted unanimously by East Anglian candidates and the frontbench. Second, it was forwarded more often, and with notably greater enthusiasm than its predecessor. Third, it developed a counter to the dogmatic attacks that harmed it in 1906 through reclaiming and reviving a general appeal to Protection, challenging the idolatry of Free Trade, and advancing a powerful appeal to the consumer as well as the producer. However, arguing that Tariff Reform in 1910 was a vote-winner when its predecessor had been a vote-loser would be going too far. A fairer reading would be that the policy of 1910 shed – or at least mitigated – many of the weaknesses that made the 1906 position a liability. This added relatively little to the original policy position, but was important because it allowed the positive aspects of Chamberlain's original scheme – the reduction of unemployment, higher wages, revenue-raising potential, and the strengthening of the Empire – to shine through more clearly than they had in 1906, when they were obscured by a highly-effective Liberal assault.

Can it be proved, however, that the better-presented Tariff Reform of 1910 won back votes that its predecessor had lost? Although it seems likely that the fiscal issue in 1906 was damaging to the Unionists, the direct evidence in the years after 1903 did not necessarily suggest the policy was an automatic vote-loser. In the by-elections after Chamberlain's announcement of the policy in May, the previously dire Unionist performances since 1901 were considerably mitigated for more than a year, before results once again turned sour by 1905.[184] In the general election of 1906 itself, it is also notable that while only 40% of the Unionist candidates nationwide were Chamberlainites, they still won 109 of the party's 157 seats (more than two-thirds).[185] In East Anglia, the average swing against the six Balfourites was 10.2%, and against the ten Whole-Hoggers just 5.4%. Although notable, these contrary statistics cannot outweigh the fact that Tariff Reform demonstrably dominated an election where Unionism crashed to a record defeat. On the other hand however, it could be said the reverse

[183] *East Anglian Daily Times*, 13 Jan 1910.

[184] Readman and Blaxill, 'Edwardian By-Elections' (forthcoming).

[185] Figures from Charmley, *Conservative Politics*, p.31 and Russell, *Liberal Landslide*, p.88. Of course, the Whole-Hoggers may have occupied the lion's share of the safest seat, so a more extensive statistical analysis would be required to prove this link.

was true in January 1910. In East Anglia, the largest Unionist advances were in seats previously fought (and lost) by Balfourites, and the national swing of 4.7% was a counter-punch almost as strong as the knockout 5.7% the party sustained in 1906.[186] While it seems more likely that Tariff Reform's main success in 1910 lay in recovering ground lost by its predecessor's defects, a return to parity was by no means an unimpressive result from a Unionist perspective. Given that the fiscal question was the premier issue again in 1910 in addresses and speeches, it therefore seems quite possible that – just as Tariff Reform had been a large part of the problem in 1906 – it had become at least part of the solution four years later.

V

Conclusion

The politics of the Edwardian period present a great challenge to historians because the advent of the Great War prevented the general election in 1915 which might have brought many of the complex underlying changes that were taking place to a political head. We would have gained insights into the emerging Liberal commitment to social reform, the degree to which they contained Labour, and whether Unionism was really in crisis. Having been deprived of the end of the story, historians have had to make a large number of educated guesses with regard to the relative strength of the parties after 1910. In this respect, this chapter has argued that historians may have somewhat overestimated the strength of Liberalism and (more seriously) underestimated that of Unionism on the eve of war. For the Liberals, it is perhaps a tribute to Clarke's *Lancashire and the New Liberalism* that it continues to be so influential, but it – along with the works of Russell, Blewett, Pugh, Searle, Belchem, Tanner, Packer, and Sykes – have arguably to some degree overplayed either its novelty as an electoral appeal, its ability to exploit an emerging language of class, or its capacity to subordinate Labour. Particularly questionable is Lynch's argument on the party's underlying strength. Her contention that the Liberals' steep rural decline in January 1910 was a temporary symptom of a record turnout inflated by 'habitual abstainers' (brought to the poll by Tory gentry) seems irreconcilable with the fact that, in December, the turnout in these 158 seats dropped back below that of 1906, and yet – even with the habitual abstainers once again abstaining – the Liberals in fact declined further.[187]

In the case of Edwardian Unionism, historians have been more consistently negative, although few recent works go as far as Green's 'crisis'. For 1906 this is entirely reasonable, but it seems much harder to fathom for the 1910 elections. For the January contests, Blewett himself notes that 'right across the spectrum of opinion in the Unionist camp there was satisfaction with the results'.[188] Indeed, for a party defending just 157 seats, led by Arthur Balfour, and forwarding a programme of Tariff Reform and the defence of hereditary power, this contemporary interpretation in many ways seems

[186] The average Unionist swing in the East Anglian constituencies in January 1910 where a Balfourite had stood in 1906 was 6.4%: 1.7 percentage points above the average swing across the region.

[187] Lynch, *Liberal Party*, pp.202-3, 235.

[188] Blewett, *Peers*, p.141.

more convincing. Indeed, although the Unionists failed to win a majority for the third time in succession in December 1910, the portents were not as ominous as Green and Blewett suggest in the months leading up to the war, where it was the Liberal position which seemed more vulnerable. In the nine by-elections in 1913-14 that were straight fights between the two major parties, the Liberals suffered an average 2.9% swing against them from December 1910, and in contests also featuring Labour, this increased to 8%. While a uniform 2.9% national swing to the Conservatives would have yielded 94 gains and a Commons majority of 62, an increased number of Labour interventions could have created a Unionist landslide.[189] If the progressive vote was consistently liable to fracture when electors were presented with multiple champions, the Unionists only needed to maintain the level of support they had achieved in 1910 not only to win in 1915, but to dominate politics. Tariff Reform might not have been a winning appeal in 1910, but it at least brought the Unionists back into a political game that – in the long run – they looked likely to win.

[189] Indeed, even if we assume a generous margin of error of 3 percentage points in the Liberals' favour, this still would translate to a 1.4% swing to the Conservatives and 43 gains. This would place them on 314 seats, just shy of an overall majority and with 85 more seats than the Liberals' 229. See Readman and Blaxill, 'Edwardian By-Elections' (forthcoming).

CONCLUSION

Understanding the War of Words: Key Characteristics of the Language of Electoral Politics, 1880-1910

The nine general election campaigns fought between 1880 and 1910 represent a vast discourse of billions of words which we can never hope to fully understand. All studies of electoral language must recognise that they are inevitably limited to illuminating small clearings in this huge forest. In this respect, this dissertation's main claim is not so much that it has been able to analyse *more* speeches than purely qualitative studies (although that is likely the case) but that it has investigated rival Conservative and Liberal platforms quantitatively and systematically on an election-by-election basis. While this approach has arguably helped shed light on the impact of the Unauthorized Programme in 1885, Home Rule in 1886 and 1892, the Boer War in 1900, the New Liberalism in the Edwardian period – and other historical controversies – the deeper question still remains: namely, what has this dissertation told us about the underlying characteristics of the language of election campaigns, and the rhetorical strategies of the parties who fought them? What follows will deal with both of these central questions in turn, and addresses a third important theme with has also underpinned the dissertation: the difference between grassroots electoral language in East Anglia, and the national campaign.[1]

I

The Nature of Electoral Language

Two key characteristics of the language of electoral politics have repeatedly surfaced throughout the dissertation. The first is the elasticity and ephemeralily of platform speech. An issue which could dominate one contest might be confined to the periphery – or dropped altogether – in the next. Such was the case with Home Rule, which dominated in 1886, was important in 1892, and was reduced to a side issue in 1895 and 1900. Imperialism, too, rose to prominence in 1900 not from a previous high watermark in 1895, but from its lowest ebb in the period. The House of Lords was almost ignored on national and East Anglian platforms until it was placed on the agenda in 1895 and (especially) 1910. Old Age Pensions were important in 1900, disappeared in 1906, and then exploded as an issue in January 1910. The *dramatis personae* of politics generally came and went just as quickly.

[1] In addition to the analysis of the previous chapters, this conclusion draws upon the entire East Anglian and national corpora (unfragmented by election year) to illustrate general trends throughout the period. In other words, it uses the subsamples for all nine elections in the period added together to form a 'Grand East Anglian corpus' and a 'Grand National Corpus'. Constituent individual party samples are still weighted to 50,000 words per election within both. In effect, each party has 450,000 words per corpus for the nine general elections, so each grand corpus is 900,000 words in total.

Chamberlain achieved 142 mentions between both parties (locally and nationally) in 1885 but he was reduced to just 48 in 1886. Gladstone, meanwhile, scored 189 combined mentions in 1880, but 512 in 1892. The dead were swiftly forgotten: Beaconsfield more or less disappeared in 1885 as did Salisbury in 1906, and Campbell-Bannerman in 1910. The recently retired also fared little better: Gladstone was reduced to 54 mentions in 1895, and Chamberlain fell from 269 in 1906 to 47 in January 1910 after his stroke.

This suggests that the post-1885 election platform was not a discourse where issues or personalities – however important they might have seemed when they had their moment in the sun – tended to linger. As such, speeches relatively seldom dwelt on the past, celebrated traditions, or gave candidates the luxury of ventilating ideas or expounding personal theories. These things were important, but were perhaps less central than historians have imagined.[2] Indeed, the seeming oddity that the so-called 'party of the monarchy' rarely mentioned the monarchy and that the 'party of Nonconformity' rarely directly cited Nonconformity was not because these issues were politically or ideologically unimportant to Conservatives and Liberals, but because they seldom directly represented the epicentre of the highly topical war of words where the parties disagreed.[3] This suggests strongly that electoral language should be regarded as a *distinct discourse* where issues, values, traditions, personalities, and ideologies could play out differently from the way they might have done in other spheres of politics. This explains how Imperialism and religion were central to Victorian and Edwardian political life, but were not consistently central to the language of the platform, and conversely, how seemingly unimportant transient fads like the Unauthorized and Newcastle Programmes (which are given comparatively limited historiographical attention) could nevertheless potentially dominate an election campaign.

Historians who have written about politics whilst largely ignoring the language of the constituency platform are thus in danger of overlooking an important strand of political discourse. It has been too easy to assume that constituency platform speakers were in thrall to their leaders, and largely reiterated important underlying political and party values of the age rather than actively shaping them. Indeed, historians have occasionally been content to generalise the language of popular

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[2] Historians who have particularly emphasised the centrality of the celebration of local traditions from the platform include P. Lynch, *The Liberal Party in Rural England, 1885-1910: Radicalism and Community*, (Oxford, 2003); C. MacDonald, 'Locality, Tradition and Language in the Evolution of Scottish Unionism: A Case Study, Paisley, 1886-1910' in C. MacDonald (ed.) *Unionist Scotland 1800-1997* (Edinburgh, 1998); T. Griffiths, *The Lancashire Working Classes, c.1880-1930* (Oxford, 2001). Matthew, meanwhile, paints a very flattering picture of Liberal meetings as forums for the ventilation of ideas and rational debate. See H. Matthew, 'Rhetoric and Politics in Great Britain, 1860-1950', in P. Waller, (ed.), *Politics and Social Change in Modern Britain* (Sussex, 1987).

[3] These words are used to described the Conservatives in this period in R. McWilliam, *Popular Politics in Nineteenth Century England* (New York, 1998), p.96 and W. Field, *Regional Dynamics: the basis of Electoral Support in Britain* (London, 1997), p.48. For the Liberals, they appear in G. Marsden, *Victorian Values: Personalities and Perspectives in Nineteenth-Century Society* (London, 1990), p.129; I. McLean, *Elections* (London, 1976), p.49; R. McKibbin, *Parties and People: England, 1914-1951* (Oxford, 2010), p.198.

politics in a way that they would almost certainly not do for Parliamentary politicians or for political writers and theorists. Perhaps the best evidence of this tendency is simply how few pages in general textbooks – which are otherwise strong on language and ideas – are dedicated to the discussion of the contents of election campaigns.

If this argument on the distinctiveness of platform discourse is accepted, we must then also take more seriously the idea that debates in election campaigns may have in themselves actively shaped and influenced party thought and doctrine rather than simply having reiterated it. Political leaders in this era – Gladstone and Salisbury perhaps represented the first – were becoming increasingly mindful not just of psephology, but also of how developments in party image and policy stood up in platform debates. Indeed, even in by-elections, the dynamics of speaking campaigns (and how they might have influenced the voting) aroused considerable interest amongst party leaders keen to assess the political weather.[4] Chamberlain, for example, felt that candidates who had stood on strong Tariff Reform platforms during 1903-1905 had outperformed those who had not, and thus felt empowered to demand a 'stiffening of the back' of the Unionists' fiscal stance.[5] This suggests that the ways in which constituency platform debates were perceived to have played out may have in themselves influenced the strategic decisions of party leaders, and even policymaking. Electoral language was thus a distinct and potentially influential discourse, and further work on contemporary reception and interpretation of speeches could throw considerable light on how and how far these platform debates at election time influenced politics more generally.[6]

The second key characteristic of electoral language demonstrated throughout this dissertation is the profound interrelationship between rival party platforms in East Anglia. What was mentioned by one side would be responded to by the other, and candidates often spent the majority of their speeches attacking the opposing party. A glance at the statistical appendices bears this out overwhelmingly: when one party campaigned hard on an issue, they would invariably be matched by a correspondingly hard counter-campaign by their opponents. The Liberals did this effectively with Tariff Reform and Pensions, but the Conservatives excelled at it throughout. On the Unauthorized Programme, Home Rule, House of Lords in both 1895 and 1910, the leadership of Gladstone, and the People's Budget, the visibility of their opposition reliably matched or exceeded that of the original Liberal proposition. Only very rarely did the dominant topics on the respective platforms diverge (the Unionist attempt to

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[4] M. Roberts, 'By-elections as Political Meteorology: Rethinking the Unionist Electoral Ascendency in Late Victorian England', P. Readman and L. Blaxill, 'Edwardian By-Elections', in P. Readman and T. Otte (eds.) *By-Elections in British Politics, 1832-1914* (Forthcoming).

[5] *The Times*, 3 Mar 1905. Chamberlain, in his reaction to the loss of the Appleby by-election, remarked that 'Since this matter became a real political fight I do not think one single seat has been won by the Unionist Party in which the candidate was half-hearted in the cause of tariff-reform. That was true of Dulwich, Lewisham, Birmingham, Mile-End, Horsham, Rochester, and Liverpool.'

[6] This arguments has been made particularly by Readman and Skinner. See P. Readman, 'Speeches', in M. Dobson and B. Ziemann (eds.) *Reading Primary Sources: the interpretation of texts from Nineteenth and Twentieth-century History* (2009), pp.216-22; Q. Skinner, *Visions of politics: Volume 1, Regarding method* (Cambridge, 2002), pp.103-5, 122-7.

resurrect Home Rule in the three Edwardian contests was perhaps the only major example of an issue being emphasised by one side and mostly ignored by the other). It is therefore erroneous for historians to assume that because an issue seemed more philosophically or ideologically important to one party, that it would necessarily feature more prominently on their platforms than on those of their opponents. After all, Liberals mentioned patriotism more often than Unionists during 1880-1910 in East Anglia, and the Tories were slightly ahead in direct references to Nonconformity.[7]

The finding that engagement with opponents' speeches was repeatedly such a key priority strongly suggests that politicians who mounted constituency platforms were more debaters than they were speakers– men whose charge was to propose, oppose, rebut, and ultimately out-argue their opponent rather than simply deliver a series of orations over several weeks. Unsurprisingly, candidates in this dog-eat-dog rhetorical environment – many of whom were fighting for their political careers – elected to prioritise hot-button issues and personalities of the day above comparatively uncontroversial reiterations of values and celebrations of traditions precisely *because* this was where clash and disagreement were easiest to find. In other words, disagreement was more often intentional than consequential. Given that only 30% of constituencies in England, Scotland, and Wales never changed hands between 1885 and1914, there were few candidates who could have felt insulated from the need to enter this war of words as partisan debaters whose platform agenda would be set by their opponents just as much as by themselves.[8]

The profound interrelationship between rival platforms is a finding with potential implications for accounts which study one party in isolation, rather than both simultaneously on an equal basis.[9] The single-party approach can be problematic because it obscures – or treats less seriously – one half of an interlaced two-sided discourse, giving an artificially insulated view of parties conducting campaigns in respective vacuums. A good example of this was explored in Chapter Three with Gladstone, where numerous studies which focused exclusively on Liberalism gave an overwhelmingly

[7] The scores for the lemma 'patriot' are 48 for the Conservatives and 56 for the Liberals. For the lemmas 'Nonconformist' and 'dissenter', the scores are 76 and 75 respectively.

[8] 168 of the 569 (30%) seats in England, Scotland and Wales never changed hands between 1885 and 1914. This figure is comprised of 115 of the 456 English seats (25%), 26 of the 34 Welsh seats (76%), 23 of the 70 Scottish seats (33%) and 4 of the 9 University seats (44%). Figures compiled from F. Craig, *British Parliamentary Election Results, 1885-1918* (Glasgow, 1974).

[9] For popular politics, these include, for example P. Lynch, *The Liberal Party in Rural England, 1885-1910: Radicalism and Community*, (Oxford, 2003); A. Windscheffel, *Popular Conservatism in Imperial London 1868-1906*, (Woodbridge, 2007); J. Moore, *The Transformation of Urban Liberalism: Party Politics and Urban Governance in Late Nineteenth-Century England* (Aldershot, 2006); M. Roberts,"'Villa toryism" and Popular Conservatism in Leeds, 1885-1902', *Historical Journal* (2006), pp.217-246 and 'Constructing a Tory World-view: Popular Politics and the Conservative Press in late-Victorian Leeds', *Historical Research*, (2006), pp.115-143. For high politics, the vast majority of accounts focus on one party. Prominent examples include R. Shannon, *The Age of Salisbury, 1881-1902: Unionism and Empire* (1996); D. Hamer, *Liberal Politics in the Age of Gladstone and Rosebery: A Study in Leadership and Policy*, (Oxford, 1972); J. Parry, *The Rise and Fall of Liberal Government in Victorian Britain*, (New Haven, 1993).

positive assessment of the Grand Old Man as an unequivocal rhetorical asset to Liberal speakers.[10] In isolation, this seems entirely fair: after all, Liberals in East Anglia and nationally mentioned him a combined total of 501 times in the four elections between 1880 and 1892, a score which dwarfed that of any other contemporary statesman. The problems begin, however, when we also consider that Conservatives mentioned him 1,039 times. Similarly, Disraeli's foreign policy might have seemed a positive rhetorical resource for Conservatives in 1880, as might Chamberlain's stature in 1906. Both, however, were arguably more powerful electoral weapons in the hands of Liberal opponents. Indeed, even quantitative analysis of both party's pre-prepared written election addresses fail to adequately capture the interactivity of the unfolding speaking campaign, as suggested by the issue of pensions in 1895, where the Unionist commitment in print failed to manifest itself on the platform.

Overall, the degree to which respective platforms were intertwined gave local candidates and parties considerably less power to unilaterally set campaign agendas than is often assumed. Conservatives could thus not simply campaign solely on beer and Empire, or the Church and the Queen. Liberals, conversely, could not solely base their appeal on temperance, Nonconformity, or Free Trade. Similarly, a candidate would struggle to ignore key national issues like Home Rule in 1886, the Boer War in 1900, or Tariff Reform in 1906 even if he had wanted to, simply because they would almost inevitably be brought up by opponents, and this would necessitate a reply. Indeed, a candidate not mentioning something was a line of attack in itself, and thus a strong deterrent against wilful silence. Candidates were still powerful. The arguments they used, the evidence they cited, and their responses to local issues and politics of place were all in their hands, as were numerous other aspects of their campaign's matter and manner. However, the central election agenda was much harder to ignore. Indeed, it is telling that in 1886 every East Anglian candidate mentioned Home Rule at least once per speech, just as every candidate mentioned Tariff Reform in 1906, and the House of Lords in December 1910. In order to increase sensitivity to the interrelationship between rival platforms, historians of Conservative and Liberal language should more highly prioritise a parallel reading of the other side, which will provide valuable insights into the reception and response to party appeals, and ultimately supply a more rounded picture of election campaigns as interconnected debates rather than as parallel streams of speeches.

II

Conservative and Liberal Rhetorical Strategies

This dissertation has found that, since 1885, the Conservative rhetorical response to the new age of democratic platform politics was, in general, remarkably skilful. In 1885, the party reacted quickly to a situation which hardly looked promising. The Tories had achieved outright majorities only twice since 1832, and their main power-base in the gentry-dominated countryside had been undermined by the

[10] See above, pp.92-3, 105-111.

enfranchisement of the agricultural labourer in 1884, and redistribution the following year. In 1885, East Anglian Conservatives immediately attacked Chamberlain and the Unauthorized Programme rather than the manifesto of Gladstone, and a number of candidates emphasised their progressive credentials. In 1886, the party exploited Home Rule, and – perhaps more notably – refused to drop the issue in later contests, with East Anglian and national speakers condemning it at every opportunity even in 1892, 1895, 1906, and 1910 despite their opponent's attempts to sideline it. If Home Rule was indeed unpopular – as most historians have argued – the Unionists fixed the label to their opponents in 1886 and re-adhered it whenever and wherever they could. In 1900, the Unionists exploited the Boer War equally skilfully, basing their appeal squarely on khaki Imperialism and making it synonymous with patriotism. They also perhaps better exploited the political power of passions, to widespread Liberal despair. In 1906, the party was thrown into confusion by Tariff Reform, and forwarded a muddled and complex appeal without its customary partisanship and clarity. However, the fact they were able to transform and rebrand the previously disastrous fiscal platform into something that was at least serviceable in 1910 was impressive. This was something the Liberals arguably never achieved with Home Rule.

More generally, the corpus has suggested that that the Conservative rhetorical strategy had two other key advantages throughout the period. The first was that their language – in East Anglia and on the national stage – was more reliably concentrated around the most important key issues of electoral politics. In 1885, they outscored the Liberals (at a local and national level) in mentions of foreign policy, and in references to Chamberlain, his programme, and its provisions of Disestablishment and Land Reform. The only issue where the Liberals held the advantage was Free Education. In 1886 and 1892, the Conservatives led on the issue of Gladstone's leadership and (from 1892 onwards) on Home Rule, and in 1900, on both the war and Imperialism. Liberals, meanwhile, were ahead on Home Rule in 1886, and on the Newcastle Programme in 1892 and 1895 (although this was a set of policies rather than a single issue). In the Edwardian period, both parties' language became considerably more concentrated (especially in 1910) with the result that the Unionists lost most of their advantage, with the Liberals leading on Social Reform, the House of Lords, the Budget (very marginally), and Tariff Reform in 1906. The Conservatives regained the advantage on Tariff Reform in both 1910 contests, led on the Navy, and (perhaps surprisingly) Chinese Labour in 1906. However, the Unionists' enduring ability to focus rhetorical fire on a nominated key issue was underscored by the efficiency with which they resurrected Home Rule in 1906 and January 1910 when the issue was hardly topical. Indeed, if we aggregate the total scores for *all* this dissertation's statistical appendices (regardless of issue or election year) we find that the Conservative grand total for East Anglia is 24,873, whereas the Liberals' is 22,043.[11] Although this is hardly a scientific analysis, it nevertheless illustrates that in a corpus of almost a million words of East Anglian speech,

[11] This analysis included all tables in the dissertation's Statistical Appendix except 3.6, 4.6, 4.7, 4.9, 5.1, 5.2, and 5.3 (which were inappropriate because they were not designed to measure the salience of key terms, issues, and ideas, but were instead used for other linguistic and non-linguistic analyses.)

Conservatives emphasised the key issues of British electoral politics in these thirty years 13% more often than did Liberals (they also enjoyed a 4% lead on the national stage).[12] Thus for every ten mentions of key issues by grassroots Liberal speakers during 1880-1910, the Conservatives responded with eleven.

The Conservative platform's second enduring strength was its unremitting partisanship. Speakers were extremely skilled at the art of co-ordinated rhetorical rebranding. In 1880 and 1885, the term 'radical' was an occasional pejorative adjective, but from 1892, East Anglian speakers suddenly began to use it as a general label for their opponents, and employed it more frequently than 'Liberal' for the remainder of the period.[13] From 1895, they also successfully rebranded themselves as 'Unionists', a term which then reliably overshadowed the traditional label of 'Conservative' both in East Anglia and on the national stage.[14] Liberal speakers were by no means bereft of partisan terminology: they used 'Tory' 35% more often than 'Unionist' and 'Conservative' combined, and ten times more frequently than their opponents.[15] However, emphasising the label 'Tory' – a term which their whig predecessors employed – hardly represented a novel rhetorical strategy, or demonstrated a comparable ability to shift the established terms of debate to their advantage. It is also perhaps telling that Conservatives mentioned the word 'party' more often in almost all the contests at a local and national level after 1885. Throughout the period, they cited it 35% more regularly than their opponents in East Anglia.[16] Indeed, even the Conservative appeal to 'independence' in the wake of their partnership with the Liberal Unionists was arguably in itself a politically calculated move.

That the Conservative platform was consistently more partisan is also arguably reflected by their disproportionate emphasis on personalities. They targeted the various Liberal Party leaders throughout the period much more effectively than the Liberals did theirs. In East Anglia, Conservatives mentioned Hartington, Gladstone, Rosebery, Campbell-Bannerman, and Asquith more than twice as frequently as Liberals cited Beaconsfield, Salisbury, and Balfour.[17] Indeed – although party leaders were universally mentioned more often by political enemies than friends – it is interesting that, while East Anglian Liberals referenced Conservative leaders 24% more often than the Tories did themselves, the reciprocal discrepancy was 73%: more than three times greater. Finally, and

[12] The equivalent national scores are 18,152 for the Conservatives, and 17,494 for Liberals.

[13] See Appendix 3.5.

[14] See Appendix 3.4.

[15] In East Anglia, the combined scores for 'Conservative' and 'Unionist' for the whole 1880-1910 period are 1,355 amongst Conservative speakers and 723 amongst Liberals. For 'Tory', they are 91 and 972 respectively.

[16] The total combined score for Conservative speakers for the lemma 'party' is 1,403 and 1,040 for Liberals.

[17] The combined scores amongst Conservative speakers for Liberal Party leaders during the 1880-1910 period was 870, whereas the combined Liberal speaker scores for leaders of the Conservative Party in the same period was 426. These scores only include the occasions when the man in question was actually leader (so Hartington, for example, is only included in the Unionist score for 1880). Note that even if Chamberlain (256 Liberal mentions during 1886-1910) is artificially included despite not being Unionist leader, the Liberal score of 682 is still 22% lower.

perhaps unsurprisingly, Unionists in East Anglia also mentioned Parnell and Redmond almost five times as often as Liberals throughout the period.[18]

Despite the seeming strengths of the Unionist rhetoric, the Liberals' platform appeals should not be thought of as necessarily less effective, as there is no evidence that more concentrated, personality-centric, and sloganistic language won votes in this period (even if this general approach became received political wisdom in later decades of the twentieth century). One important rhetorical resource which the Liberals arguably better exploited throughout the period was the politics of place. An comprehensive analysis of mentions of East Anglian place names (as well as generic terms such as 'countryside' 'village' and 'town') reveals that Liberals throughout the period led by 17%, with 1,964 net mentions to the Conservatives' 1,680.[19] Their lead in Norfolk (at 47%) was especially strong, perhaps reflecting the party's success in the county throughout the period, while in Suffolk (where the Unionists generally held the electoral advantage) they ceded a small deficit of 7%.[20] Of course, there was a great deal more to politics of place simply than this group of local words (indeed, politics of place by definition would be impossible to taxonomise universally across a region) but the overall Liberal lead is sustained over a huge sample of speech, and – as with the above finding on the concentration of Conservative vocabulary – hints at a subtle underlying distinction that may have existed between the parties in East Anglia.

A second characteristic of Liberal language in East Anglia was that speakers – in general – seemed to more closely follow the agenda of their national leaders, despite the party's more extensive employment of local vocabulary. If we once again (as above) analyse the scores for all the dissertation's appendices added together, and simply measure the difference between each corresponding local and national reading throughout, we find that East Anglian Conservatives deviated from their national leaders by 37% over the period, but Liberals differed by only 26%.[21] In some ways, this might be regarded as a counter-argument to this dissertation's contention that Conservative speakers forwarded a more disciplined, concentrated, and partisan appeal. However, it also might equally be pointed out that the greater deviance between East Anglian Conservatives and their leaders was largely a function of their local speaker's tendency to exaggerate appeals more than their opponents. Both party's national aggregates (18,152 for the Conservatives and 17,494 for the

[18] The respective scores are 160 for the Conservatives, and 35 for Liberals.

[19] The keywords used were: 'Nofolk', 'Suffolk', 'East Anglia', 'eastern', 'Ipswich', 'Norwich', 'Bury', 'Eye', 'Stowmarket', 'Sudbury', 'Woodbridge', 'Yarmouth', 'Lowestoft', 'Aylsham', 'Diss', 'Dereham', 'Cromer', 'Walsham', 'Holt', 'Sherringham', 'Wells', 'Hunstanton', 'Downham', 'Wymondham', 'Attleburgh', 'Harleston', 'Watton', 'Fakenham', 'Framlingham', 'Southwold', 'Aldeburgh', 'Felixstowe', 'Haverhill', 'Saxmundham', 'village', 'town', 'countryside', 'rural', 'city', 'municipal', 'council', 'parish', 'community'.

[20] The combined scores for all Norfolk place names (and Norfolk itself) is 519 for the Conservatives and 763 for Liberals. For Suffolk, the scores are 471 and 445 respectively.

[21] The combined totals for the national stage for Conservative speakers is 18,152, and 24,873 for East Anglia. For the Liberals, these scores are 17,494 and 22,043 respectively. See pp.215-16 above, and n.12.

Liberals) are very similar: the deviation between frontbench and grassroots is largely explained by the fact that Conservatives intensified their East Anglian appeals by 6,721 additional mentions (to arrive at the aforementioned grand total of 24,873) while the Liberals intensified theirs by 4,549 (to reach 22,043). In this light, it might be argued that Conservatives once again demonstrated a proficient rhetorical strategy because they better adapted their language to the more involved and brutal arena of constituency platform debate.

Finally, the Liberals set the terms of debate more often than they followed them. Despite historians' recent and welcome emphasis on the positive aspects of popular Conservatism, this dissertation has served to reiterate how often the Liberals set the agenda, even in elections such as 1892 and 1895 when their position seemed weak. Most of the key topics which framed debate originated from their platforms, and from the actions of their governments. Indeed, the majority of the most dominating national personalities were also on their side, and the most mentioned Unionist statesman (Chamberlain) was not a Conservative at all. The Liberals' difficulty – given the innate bias in electoral language towards attack over defence – was that setting the agenda could create more problems than it solved. If anything, the party said and did too much rather than too little, and offered their opponents more targets to shoot at than their opponents offered them. When the Liberals got a clear chance to attack – as they most clearly did on Pensions during 1900-1910, Tariff Reform in 1906, and the House of Lords in 1910 – they were as effective as the Unionists, but their opportunities to thrust the rhetorical sword were outweighed by their obligations to parry with the rhetorical shield. The party was certainly beginning to even the score in the Edwardian period, however, with greater partisanship, personality-centric attacks, and concentrated assaults. They also redressed their previous deficit on exciting positive audience reactions: from usually being behind throughout 1880-1900, they moved comfortably into the lead in these three contests.[22]

However, this did little to change the main dividing line between Conservative and Liberal rhetoric in general (and in East Anglia in particular) that had developed throughout the period. The battle was not so much positivity versus negativity, or rationalism versus irrationalism, but more often simply proposition versus opposition. Both party's speakers were naturally compelled to perform a large element of both, but the Conservatives perhaps had more opportunity to exploit the natural advantage in the latter, and used those opportunities with co-ordination and skill. Whether this won votes in East Anglia – a region which remained remarkably marginal throughout the period – is less clear, but it would not be unfair to suggest that the Conservatives fought back from an ominous position of weakness after their heavy defeat in 1885, and the Liberals failed to capitalise on an auspicious position of strength. In this light – if the thousands of words issued from the platform really did count for something at the polls – then the Unionists may have made them count for more. Their speeches might have seemed somewhat repetitive, negative, intellectually wanting from some

[22] See Appendix 4.9.

contemporaries – and a good number of historians too – but the politics of the so-called 'stupid party' was arguably anything but.

III

The Language of East Anglia

The dissertation has highlighted a number of interesting differences between the language of electoral politics in East Anglia, and that of the national frontbench campaigns. The first is simply that the strong distinctive historical character of the region seemed to count for relatively little in electoral politics.[23] 'East Anglia' was mentioned just 33 times between the parties throughout 1880-1910, compared to (for example) scores of 535 for 'Norfolk', 164 for 'Suffolk', 356 for 'Ipswich' and 386 for 'Norwich'. This is in spite of the sustained strength of the regional press throughout the period, which featured two important and widely circulating dailies (the *East Anglian Daily Times* and the *Eastern Daily Press*). This suggests, even though region may have been an important component of social and cultural identity in nineteenth and early twentieth century Britain (as historians have argued), that it was perhaps less integral to political identity. [24] In East Anglia at least, county, town, and constituency identity attained far greater visibility in political discourse.

More substantially, the dissertation has repeatedly suggested that local constituency electoral politics was a fiercer war of words than the national platform. With the exception of foreign policy (an area that national speakers might be expected to prioritise) the dissertation's appendices suggest that almost all the main issues of electoral politics were emphasised more intensely from local platforms. Indeed, as we have seen, the grand total scores for all the appendix readings added together is 46,916 for East Anglia (24,873 for the Conservatives plus 22,043 for the Liberals) versus 35,646 for the national stage (18,152 plus 17,494 respectively). This suggests that constituency electoral language was 32% more concentrated around the key political issues: a considerable difference. This reflected, perhaps, the greater need for local speakers to be shorter, snappier, and more sloganistic– to be (in Moisei Ostrogorski's words) 'fluent and copious, and quick at repartee' and (in J.H.S. Lloyd's) to 'be short, [and] be simple'.[25] National speakers (who often spoke outside their own constituencies) were less likely to be wading into a specific local debate, and even when they did speak in their own divisions at a marquee meeting which might carry a major report in a national daily like *The Times*, they squarely prioritised their message to the country.[26] They also spoke without anything like the same risk of disruption and violence. The rhetorical climate they occupied was thus more benign: they

[23] For a description of the distinctness of East Anglia as a region, see H. Pelling, *Social Geography of British elections, 1885-1910* (London, 1967), pp.87-90.

[24] E. Royle, 'Introduction: Regions and Identities', pp.1-13; N. McCord, 'The Regional Identity of North-East England in the Nineteenth and Twentieth centuries', pp.102-117, both in E. Royle (ed.) *Issues of Regional Identity* (Manchester, 1998).

[25] M. Ostrogorski, *Democracy and the Organisation of Political Parties*, (London, 1902), vol.1, p.444; J. Lloyd, *Elections and how to fight them* (London, 1905), p.36.

[26] Matthew, 'Rhetoric and Politics', pp.39-43.

had no direct opponent, little chance of interruption, and had the luxury of much more extensive reporting than would likely be afforded to most local candidates.

In addition to being less concentrated around key issues, national speakers were also more long-winded. It is possible to use a number of statistical tests developed by literary scholars to measure the complexity of written and spoken texts (which uses metrics such as average length of sentence, average number of syllables per word etc). According to six different readability tests (Gunning Fog Index, Coleman Liau, Automated Readability Index, SMOG, Flesch Reading Ease, and Flesch Kincaid Grade) the language of national speakers consistently registers as more complex.[27] The most immediately understandable of these tests to a non-specialist is the Flesch Kincaid Grade, which is designed to measure how many years formal schooling would be required to understand the text. In this case, the reading for East Anglia is 8.6, and for the national stage, 9.71. Indeed, the slightly more pedestrian pace of national meetings was also reflected by slightly more sedate behaviour of the audiences, who were noted as having cheered, laughed, and applauded 10,224 times throughout the national corpus, but 11,207 times in East Anglia (a 10% difference).

These findings further reinforce the distinct character of electoral language at the grassroots, and thus underscore the limitations of studies which investigate speaking campaigns entirely through the prism of the national platform.[28] It also emphasises the importance of the local or regional study which examines the real war of words in the constituencies. Generally, historians of popular politics such as Lawrence, Windscheffel, Lynch, Rix and Tanner have stressed the distinctions between the speaking campaigns in different constituencies, and their resistance to the forces of 'nationalisation'.[29] This dissertation certainly does not find any particular evidence that local and national patterns of vocabulary were converging in this period. The elections of 1910 may have been moving in that direction (the distinction between local and national readings in the appendices is generally the lowest in the period) but this evidence is not strong enough to sustain a contrary conclusion. However, it is also worth pointing out that the general distribution of keywords between Norfolk and Suffolk constituencies throughout these nine elections was remarkably even, suggesting that the key issues that this dissertation has examined played out (in a quantitative sense at least) relatively similarly in both counties. However, this again suggests relatively little on its own. An illuminating future study might compare language between separate regions, perhaps contrasting East Anglia with others such as

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[27] The respective scores (shown in the format National- East Anglian) are: Average Words Per Sentence: 19.07-17.43; Gunning Fog Index: 12.11-10.77; Coleman Liau: 8.88-8.63; Automated Readability Index: 9.1-8.12; SMOG: 11.77-10.98; Flesch Reading Ease: 59.4-64.12; Flesch Kincaid Grade: 9.71-8.65.

[28] These include Matthew, 'Rhetoric and Politics'; J. Meisel, *Public Speech and the Culture of Public Life in the Age of Gladstone* (New York, 2001); A. Robertson, *The Language of Democracy: Political Rhetoric in the United States and Britain, 1790-1900* (Charlottesville, 2005); A. Russell, *Liberal Landslide : the General Election of 1906* (Newton Abbot, 1973); N. Blewett, *The Peers, the Parties and the People: the General Elections of 1910* (Bristol, 1972); T. Lloyd, *The General Election of 1880* (London, 1968), as well as the vast majority of general textbooks which cover the period.

[29] For a fuller discussion, see L. Blaxill. 'Electioneering, the Third Reform Act, and Political Change in the 1880s', *Parliamentary History* (2011), pp.343-73.

Lancastria and the North-East, where we might expect electoral language to be the most different. This would perhaps allow us to better judge how and how far the undoubted important idiosyncrasies and traditions of the politics of place really manifested themselves in platform rhetoric in these years.

IV

This Dissertation as a Methodological Experiment

This dissertation begun by discussing the challenge of reintegration in Political History: how historians might retain the detailed emphasis on language which has been the legacy of the linguistic turn, but also augment these detailed readings with greater explanatory power. Its answer has been to use corpora to measure scope, typicality, and context in large samples of language while retaining a close reading of the speeches. Its analysis has, in some instances, confirmed what historians have already argued, and in others it has suggested the new. Many objections can be made against this dissertation's methods, but it seems difficult to dispute the overarching principle: that quantifying language can be a valuable enterprise in discourses as huge as election campaigns which, despite plentiful scholarship, we inevitably still know relatively little about. Such quantification is arguably at its best when it is used simply: even a basic chaff-sorter can get us a very long way when if it is used wisely, and this renders corpora potentially very powerful.

The failures of quantification in History in the past should not preclude us from looking at what corpora can offer us: we need only look at other disciplines such as Political Science – where scholars often study identical political texts – to find compelling evidence that we should look them seriously. Indeed, the analysis of corpora need not necessarily even be quantitative: qualitative text analysis software such as *NVivo 9*, *Atlas.Ti*, and *MaxQDA* facilitate a deeper reading through manual coding, allowing the user to visualise, retrieve, and draw together different strands of evidence from huge datasets. Irrespective of whether this dissertation has answered the challenge of reintegration, there seems no doubt that the rapidly growing availability of machine-readable historical texts presents today's scholars with an extraordinary opportunity. The British Library's Nineteenth Century Newspapers Collection, Millbank System's Hansard Parliamentary Debates, the British Official Publications Collaborative Reader Information Service, British Periodicals Online, and others provide easy access to billions of words of data. A multi-million word corpus can now potentially be assembled for free in a few hours, when it would have cost a historian of even a decade ago hundreds of thousands of pounds, and several years work. Such an opportunity would surely be wasted if these resources were not used boldly and adventurously to attempt new kinds of research.

APPENDIX A

Technical and Methodological

Two corpora form the quantitative engine of this dissertation. The first is the 'East Anglian Corpus' which is composed of election-per-election subsamples of constituency Conservative and Liberal speech for the years 1880-1910. It contains approximately a million words. The speeches were taken from the Norfolk and Suffolk press, and each subsample contains equal word-counts for each party, and for each of the region's sixteen constituencies.[30] The second is the 'National Speaker Corpus'. This is composed of all the extra-Parliamentary orations of frontbench politicians delivered during election campaigns that were reported in *The Times*. It is similarly subdivided by party and by general election year, and contains approximately 1.5 million words. In both corpora, each subsection – for example East Anglian Conservative speeches in 1895, or national Liberal speeches in 1900 – is weighted to a ratio of 50,000 words to enable direct like-for-like comparisons. In addition, this dissertation also occasionally refers to a third corpus of Parliamentary debates, compiled from Hansard, which provides a further useful reference.

The dissertation also makes use of a small number of special purpose-built corpora, which enable in-depth analysis of certain specific topics. For example, Chapter Four uses a 'Pro-Boer Corpus' comprised of speeches from constituencies in 1900 where a 'Pro-Boer' Liberal was standing, and Chapter Five uses two special corpora to investigate the language of the emerging Edwardian Labour Party in the years 1906-1910. As these special corpora are used only once each, they are introduced individually in the main text at the points they are utilised. Finally, this appendix also outlines an additional corpus which was not used in this dissertation, but could be employed in future work.

The East Anglian and National corpora can be found on the attached CD-ROM as machine-readable text files. They were interrogated with two free software packages: *TextStat* (a simple program) and *Antconc* (a more complex one).[31] The file 'Instructions.pdf' on the CD-ROM is a very basic non-technical step-by-step guide, which describes how to interrogate the corpora with *Antconc*.

The remainder of this appendix gives a full anatomical outline for East Anglian and National corpora, and describes how they were created, and then how they were interrogated. For further discussion of their strengths and weaknesses, and a defence of these specific corpora as viable

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[30] Between 1885 and 1910, the borough seats were: Bury St. Edmunds, Ipswich (two seats), King's Lynn, Norwich (two seats), and Yarmouth. The counties were Eye, Lowestoft, Stowmarket, Sudbury, Woodbridge, and Norfolk East, Mid, South, South-West, North, and North-West. In 1880 before redistribution, the electoral map naturally looked quite different. The boroughs were Ipswich, Norwich, King's Lynn, Bury St. Edmunds, and Eye. The counties were Suffolk Eastern and Western, and Norfolk Northern, Western, and Southern. Each returned two members, except for Eye, which returned one.

[31] *TextStat* is published by Freie Universität Berlin, and is available at http://neon.niederlandistik.fu-berlin.de/en/textstat/. *Antconc* was published independently by the Corpus Linguist Dr. Laurence Anthony, and is available at http://www.antlab.sci.waseda.ac.jp/software.html.

representatives of the language of electoral politics in these years, see Chapter One, Section IV 'This Dissertation's Corpora'.

I

Anatomy: East Anglian Corpus

The East Anglian corpus contains approximately a million words of speech from 1880-1910, digitally scanned from newspapers. It is subdivided between the two parties, and between the nine general election years, so has eighteen subdivisions in total. Naturally, compiling this corpus presented a number of considerable challenges. Many were logistical: some newspapers held in archives were worn, smudged, poorly microfilmed, and the quality of the newsprint too poor to use Optical Character Recognition (OCR) software reliably (particularly from 1895 on, when cheaper, poorer quality paper began to be widely used). Equally, it was often difficult to obtain speeches for some rural constituencies, as the press was usually heavily biased towards boroughs (such as Ipswich and Norwich) where most newspapers were based and published.

There were also a number of historical challenges, not least the partisanship of the press, and the presence of Liberal Unionists in East Anglia from 1886. There were also complications such as double-member boroughs, uncontested seats, and frontbench guest speakers who occasionally visited constituencies (and tended to dominate the press coverage when they did). To ensure the most representative and comparable samples of speech, the following controls were adhered to throughout:

1.) Each party's subsample was limited to 50,000 words per election.
2.) Equal instalments were used for each constituency (as ratios of 50,000) depending on the number of contested seats. In 1885 for example – where all 18 seats were contested by both parties – I have used 2,778 words per constituency, except for Ipswich and Norwich which were double-member boroughs, where I used 5,556 words. In 1886, where the Liberals contested 14 seats, I used 3,571 words for each contested constituency.[32]
3.) Speeches made in uncontested seats were excluded from the corpora.
4.) Speeches made by Liberal Unionists were excluded from the corpora.[33]

[32] The one exception to this rule was the Eye in January 1910, where the Liberal candidate W.H.M. Pearson was absent ill throughout the campaign, and did not deliver any reported speeches. Eye was thus treated as an uncontested seat in the January 1910 Liberal corpus subsection.

[33] Placing constituency Liberal Unionists and Conservatives in the same corpus (especially in 1886 and 1892) would be a controversial move given the recent arguments of historians such as Ian Cawood, who contend that a separate and distinct Liberal Unionist identity existed even into the Edwardian period. Moreover, such a move would compromise the ability of the corpus to make like-for-like comparisons between Conservatives from 1880 and 1885 (before the alliance was formed). Studying Liberal Unionists separately through their own corpus would be possible in theory, but was also ruled out of this dissertation because there were insufficient Liberal Unionist candidatures in East Anglia to enable anything approaching a substantial corpus to be compiled.

5.) Visiting frontbench speakers were excluded. The only speeches used are ones made by local party men and candidates.

6.) Speeches were taken from a wide variety of newspapers. The only major restriction was that newspapers which carried a clear bias towards one party – such as the *Suffolk Chronicle* (Liberal) or the *Ipswich Journal* (Conservative) – were only used as a source for speeches from that party, not the opposing one. Citations for each speech appear in the corpus text files.

7.) Speeches were selected simply by availability, and those with the longest word-count were used as first priority. If the wordcount quota for a particular constituency was reached midway through a speech, then the surplus text was not included. This method meant, of course, that I scanned more words (c.10%) than are included in the final corpus. With mathematical weighting, it would have been possible to use these extra words by multiplying down results from constituencies which exceeded the wordcount This was rejected, however, because it would have made concordancing greatly more laborious (both for me and for others who might use the corpora) and also because it would have turned the corpus into a mathematical construct. This would have served to further divorce the methodology from simple aggregation and sampling, for comparatively limited reward.

II

Anatomy: National and Parliamentary Debates Corpora

The National corpus contains approximately 1.5 million words of speech taken from *The Times*. As it is a comparative reference corpus, the selection criteria is looser than for the East Anglian corpus. It simply includes every extra-Parliamentary speech that was reported by a frontbench politician from the date of dissolution of Parliament to the date of the last return.

The word-counts are not consistent. During a longer campaign, the volume of speech reported is naturally higher. For example, in 1885, *The Times* reported over a quarter of a million words of Liberal speech, whereas in 1895, it reported only 55,000. In order to make the findings directly comparable to the East Anglian corpus, concordance readings are thus also weighted to 50,000 word ratios. So for 1885, the Liberal readings were multiplied by 0.2, whereas for 1895, they were multiplied by 0.91.

There are two further anatomical notes. The first is that Liberal Unionists are excluded up until 1895. From 1895 onwards, they are included in the Conservative corpus. This is because, at a Parliamentary level, the Unionist frontbench was working together very closely by this point, and even closely co-ordinating their speaking campaigns.[34] The Liberal Unionist statesmen who were reported

[34] See J. Fair, 'From Liberal to Conservative: The Flight of the Liberal Unionists after 1886', *Victorian Studies* (1986), pp.291-314; P. Fraser, 'The Liberal Unionist Alliance: Chamberlain, Hartington and the Conservatives, 1886-1904', *English Historical Review* (1962), pp. 53-78; J. France, 'Salisbury and the Unionist Alliance' in R. Blake and H. Cecil (eds.), *Salisbury: The Man and his Policies* (Basingstoke, 1987).

in *The Times* were Chamberlain, Devonshire, Goschen, and Henry James. The second note is that Lord Rosebery is excluded from the Liberal subsections for both 1910 contests. While Rosebery was still nominally a Liberal in 1910, his speeches during these campaigns were squarely attacks on his own party's stance on the House of Lords.

The Parliamentary Debates corpus was simply compiled by taking every word from Parliamentary debates (in both Houses) from Hansard, for a year before the dissolution of Parliament prior to a general election. This corpus is referred to only a handful of times throughout the dissertation for comparative purposes, so no attempt was made to filter by party. The readings are similarly weighted to 50,000 word ratios.

III

How the Corpora were Created

The corpora were created in four main stages:

1. **Sourcing**. The newspapers were sourced (in microfilm or bound volumes) either in the British Newspaper Library, or in libraries and archives in East Anglia (principally the Norwich Heritage Centre, Suffolk Record Office at Ipswich, Great Yarmouth Public Library, and King's Lynn Public Library). They were also found in three online repositories: *The Times Digital Archive*, the British Library's *Nineteenth Century Newspapers Collection*, and Millbank System's *Hansard 1803-2005*.

2. **Obtaining images**. To enable a computer to recognise the text, digital images of the speeches were needed. For material only available on microfilm or bound volumes, high quality copies were obtained, and then scanned into a computer. For *The Times Digital Archive* and *Nineteenth Century Newspapers Collection*, images were simply downloaded and saved. Some sharpening of the images was sometimes useful, using Adobe Photoshop (principally the levels and brightness/contrast controls).

3. **Text Recognition**.[35] The images were machine-read using the OCR software package *Abby Fine-Reader*. This software package was also trained so as to better recognise old newsprint. Accuracy was usually between 85-99% depending on the clarity of the newsprint.

4. **Correction and checking.** The corpora were proofread and OCR errors corrected manually, and through the use of some automatic filters such as spell-checks. The corpora were then

[35] OCR was not necessary with the Hansard corpus, where text could simply be copied directly.

simply saved as text documents. On a small number of occasions, the newsprint was of such poor quality that OCR was not possible. These speeches were manually dictated with speech recognition software before being proofread and corrected.

Even after correction, the corpora will still inevitably still contain some OCR errors. Overall, the East Anglia corpus is 99% accurate, the National corpus 97% accurate, and the Hansard Corpus 100% accurate. Any potential errors arising from the remaining inaccuracies are mitigated by:

1. *TextStat's* and *Antconc's* fuzzy search which allows words similar to the object (e.g.) 'Glad$tone' to be shown to the user for review.
2. Searching initially for the 'stem' of the words with a wildcard (e.g. 'Irel*, agric*). The software then detects all words which start with this group of letters. They can then be reviewed, and inappropriate ones excluded
3. Double-checking each reference with Keyword in Context (KWIC) analysis.
4. Manually reading the corpus itself: repeating OCR errors are likely to be easy to notice

IV

How the Corpora were Interrogated: Important Rules

The corpora were also interrogated very carefully to ensure that nothing was included incorrectly, and nothing was excluded which should have been included. The following general rules were adhered to throughout:

1. Every word quantified in this dissertation has been checked manually in its original context using KWIC. This allows me to exclude words which are irrelevant. For example, to differentiate between financial 'duties' and an MP's 'duties' to his constituents.
2. Lemmas are searched for, not simply the words listed in the appendices. This ensures all possible variations are captured. For example, for the lemma 'farm', I would also include 'farms', 'farmer', 'farming', 'farmed', and 'farmland'. For 'British', I would also include 'Britain', 'Britishness', 'Briton', 'Britannia', and Britisher'.
3. Where there are direct like-for-like synonyms (which is relatively rare) they are also included. For example, the searches for 'Gladstone' in 1886 also include 'the Prime Minister'.
4. The East Anglian Corpus has been read in its entirety: a powerful guard against inaccuracies. This reading was also the principal means by which words were selected for the taxonomies.

V

An Extra Unused Corpus:
Constituencies Outside of East Anglia

During the latter stages of this PhD project, a further supplementary corpus was compiled to represent the grassroots constituency speaking campaign outside of East Anglia. As it transpired, this corpus was not used at all in this dissertation. However, it may be of interest to other scholars, and might be referenced in future publications. I will thus outline the anatomy of this 'Outside of East Anglia' corpus below. It contains 50,000-100,000 word installments for each party for the six elections fought between 1880 and 1900. The constituencies chosen for each election were selected according to the digital availability of newspapers through the British Library Nineteenth Century Newspapers Collection. Despite the limitations of the collection, it was possible to compile a varied corpus for all six elections (drawing upon 25-50 constituencies per contest) that represent the diversity of Britain's regions and constituency types, as defined by Neal Blewett.[36] No individual constituency makes up more than 10% of the wordcount, and each section strikes a roughly equal balance between boroughs and counties. Overall, this supplementary corpus' purpose is to tentatively illustrate broader trends in grassroots language beyond East Anglia in a wide range of other localities, and it is not intended to be anything approaching perfectly representative of the national British speaking campaign.

The 1880 subdivision contains speeches from: Maldon, Nottingham, Derby, Hull, Newcastle, Durham, Northallerton, Manchester, Wrexham, Flint, Oxford, Portsmouth, Birmingham, Bristol, Lancaster, South Lincolnshire, West Gloucestershire, East Derbyshire, East Essex, South Leicestershire, North Leicestershire, South Durham, East Riding, West Riding, Carmarthenshire, North Lancashire, North East Lancashire, South Lancashire, West Glamorganshire, South Lincolnshire West, North Lincolnshire, Aberdeenshire, East Worcestershire, North Nottinghamshire, North Essex, East Devon, South Northumberland, Invernesshire, and County Antrim.

The 1885 subdivision contains speeches from: Colchester, Bristol North, Bristol South, Bristol East, Derby, Oxford, Portsmouth, Newcastle Upon Tyne, Aberdeen North, Sheffield Brightside, Leeds South, Leeds West, Leeds North, Oxford, Preston, Cardiff District of Boroughs, South Derbyshire, West Derbyshire, Mid Glamorganshire, Staffordshire Burton, North Oxfordshire, South Oxfordshire, Mid Oxfordshire, Tyneside Berwick, Cheshire Eddisbury, West Worcestershire, South Worcestershire, Essex Harwich, Leicestershire Harborough, Gloucestershire Thornbury, Durham Houghton-Le-Spring, East Denbighshire, Westmorland Appleby, Yorkshire Richmond, Yorkshire Pudsey, Yorkshire Oldcross, Yorkshire Sowerby, South Derbyshire, and North Somerset.

[36] Blewett classifies constituencies as either 'Urban predominantly middle-class', 'Urban mixed class', Urban predominantly working class', 'Mixed urban/rural', 'Rural', and 'Mining'. The corpus contains a roughly representative portion of each for both 1880 and 1885. See N. Blewett, *The Peers, the Parties, and the People: the General Elections of 1910* (Bristol, 1972), pp.488-94.

The 1886 subdivision contains speeches from: Leeds East, Leeds North, Leeds Central, Huddersfield, Sheffield Central, Sheffield Brightside, Sheffield Attercliffe, Bristol North, Bristol West, Bristol South, Wolverhampton East, Elgin Boroughs, Cardiff Boroughs, Liverpool Abercromby, Birkenhead, Liverpool Exchange, Cardiganshire, Otley, Pudsey, Osgoldcross, Pontefract, Ripon, Holmfirth, Blackburn, Thornbury, Accrington, Frome, North Somerset, Essex Harwich, Flintshire West, Colchester, Glasgow Blackfriars, Glasgow Bridgeton, Widnes, Southampton, Newport, Truro-Helston, Lanarkshire, Dunbartonshire, Denbighshire, York, Ripon, Thirsk and Malton, Richmondshire, Banffshire, East Aberdeenshire, Kincardineshire, South Aberdeen, Darlington, South-East Durham, Bishop Auckland, South-East Cornwall, Nottingham East, Derby, Loughborough, St Ives, Worcester, Leicestershire Harborough, Leicester, West Birmingham, Central Birmingham, Birmingham Bordersley, and Chester.

The 1892 subdivision contains speeches from: Leicestershire Harborough, Loughborough, Durham, Leicester, Colchester, Harwich, Maldon, Ecclesall, Sheffield Brightside Sheffield Attercliffe, Sheffield Hallam, York, Thirsk and Malton, Richmond, Ripon, Cardiff Boroughs, Monmouth Boroughs, Forfarshire, Doncaster, Buckrose, Howdenshire, Stockton, Glamorganshire East, Glamorganshire South, Richmondshire, Derby, Barnard Castle, Oxford, Mid Oxfordshire, Portsmouth, Fareham, South Hampshire, Newcastle, Hexham, Bosworth, Essex Harwich, Lancaster, Worcester, East Worcestershire, Southampton, New Forest, Birmingham South, Birmingham Central, Birmingham Bordersley, Middlesbrough, Pudsey, Sowerby, Glasgow Bridgeton, Glasgow Tradeston, Glasgow College, Ayrshire South, West Derbyshire, Exeter, Carnarvon Boroughs, Lanark Northeast, Preston, West Toxteth, Newcastle, South Somerset, Dewsbury, Huddersfield, Ilkeston, Bassetlaw, South Aberdeen, and Darwen.

The 1895 subdivision contains speeches from: Stockton, Glasgow Central, Glasgow Tradeston, Glasgow College, Liverpool Exchange, Liverpool Kirkdale, Birkenhead, Denbighshire, Leeds Central, Leeds West, Leeds East, Leeds South, Lanarkshire Patrick, Lanarkshire South, East Glamorgan, Dundee, Huddersfield, Scarborough, York, Barnard Castle, Doncaster, Hallamshire, Carnarvonshire Arvon, Carnarvon Boroughs, Oxford, Tynemouth, Darwen, Accrington, Chester, North Shropshire, Flint Boroughs, Cheshire Eddisbury, Isle of Wight, Leicester, Leicestershire Harborough, Maldon, Colchester, Wrexham, West Denbighshire, Flint Boroughs, Whitby, Richmondshire, Darlington, Chesterfield, Derby, South Derbyshire, Colne Valley, Richmond, Ripon, South-East Durham, Holderness, Truro-Helston, Hallamshire, Bosworth, Colchester, Worcester, East Aberdeenshire, and Bishop Auckland.

The 1900 subdivision contains speeches from: Cardiff Boroughs, Barnard Castle, South-East Durham, The Hartlepools, South-East Cornwall, Truro-Helston, Buckrose, Osgoldcross, Pudsey, Derby, East Perthshire, Ecclesall, Spen Valley, South Oxfordshire, Portsmouth, Blackburn, Colchester, Chester, Cheshire Eddisbury, Leicester, Leicestershire Harborough, Bosworth, Huddersfield, Inverness Boroughs, Aberdeen South, Lanarkshire Northeast, Midlothian, Camlachie, Northwest Lanark, Crewe, Edinburgh West, Glasgow College, Glasgow Bridgeton, Glasgow

Blackfriars, Darlington, Leeds West, Leeds East, Halifax, Skipton, St Helens, East Toxteth, Dundee, Sheffield Brightside, Stockton, Exeter, East Birmingham, South Birmingham, Fareham, Forfarshire, Bradford, North Belfast, North Down, Wolverhampton East, Dewsbury, and Otley.

Because (at the time of writing) the British Library Nineteenth Century Newspapers Project finishes in 1900, extending this corpus into the Edwardian period would require the manual sourcing and processing of speeches from hard copies and microfilm, thus presenting a far larger logistical and financial challenge. This was therefore not attempted, but instalments for 1906, January 1910, and December 1910 may be added as part of a future project.

APPENDIX B

Statistical Appendices

The following pages contain the statistical appendices for Chapters Two, Three, Four and Five. The statistical appendices use an intuitive numbering system, and are frequently referred to in the main text, and in footnotes. Note that, in order to remove the need for time-consuming cross-referencing, some data is duplicated between the statistical appendices for each chapter.

Key

Colour-coding has been avoided in this appendix to avoid confusion. However the acronym '**EA**' stands for East Anglia, and '**NAT**' for National Speakers. '**CON**', '**LIB**', and '**LAB**' are also used for parties.

User Notes

- All scores provided in the tables (unless specifically indicated) are for lemmas, not just the words as printed. This means that all variants are included as well as the word itself. For example, the lemma 'farm' includes 'farms', 'farmer', 'farming', 'farmed', and 'farmland'. For 'British', it includes 'Britain', 'Britishness', 'Briton', 'Britannia', and Britisher'.
- All readings throughout the statistical appendices are based on corpora of exactly 50,000 words per party, per election. All readings are thus directly comparable with each other throughout. The one exception is Appendix 5.3, which concerns the Labour Party in Norwich. Please see the accompanying advisory note on that page.
- The appendices often include supplementary columns such as 'Mean 1880-1900' or 'Mean 1880-1910'. These are simply averaged scores across all the elections in these years, and are included simply to provide a further comparative context.
- Total scores for all the words on the table are included at the foot of each table. These are not necessarily the most important readings, but are often illustrative of the wider picture.
- Whole numbers are used throughout. Decimals are rounded up or down.

Appendix 2.1: Agriculture, and the Countryside (General)

East Anglia

Lemma	CON 1880	LIB 1880	CON 1885	LIB 1885	CON Mean 1886-1910	LIB Mean 1886-1910
Acre	3	0	22	29	5	9
Agriculture	56	68	53	40	39	28
Allotment/Smallholding	5	0	19	35	8	13
Community	0	3	8	12	6	6
Cottage	0	0	14	9	5	6
Cow	0	0	14	5	3	2
Crops*	16	23	33	29	23	23
Farm	61	115	55	39	14	37
Field	4	4	5	3	3	3
Labourer	2	6	95	59	24	31
Land Reform	68	50	158	130	45	60
Landlord/Landowner	33	43	21	17	13	22
Malt tax	8	18	6	6	0	0
Parish	1	3	10	12	13	12
Parson	3	2	3	1	1	3
Rural	5	0	1	13	2	2
Settlement	3	3	2	10	11	5
Soil	5	4	3	4	1	1
Tenant	54	31	22	4	5	8
Tenure	1	1	2	3	1	3
Transfer	0	1	15	8	1	4
Rent	5	7	18	6	4	10
Game laws	21	24	7	6	0	1
Corn/Wheat/Bread/Loaf	8	5	32	30	39	30
Food	3	6	10	9	26	23
Total	**351**	**401**	**600**	**491**	**294**	**340**

**Includes 'crops', 'corn', 'wheat', 'barley', 'malt', 'potato'.*

National agriculture lemmas continued overleaf…

National

Lemma	CON 1880	LIB 1880	CON 1885	LIB 1885
Acre	8	5	11	8
Agriculture	28	6	40	28
Allotment/Smallholding	0	4	6	10
Community	5	4	9	14
Cottage	0	1	3	1
Cow	0	1	7	1
Crops*	4	6	14	16
Farm	17	26	12	19
Field	1	3	3	3
Labourer	0	3	28	40
Land Reform	26	56	90	82
Landlord/Landowner	15	15	14	22
Malt tax	0	1	0	2
Parish	0	1	1	2
Parson	0	0	3	1
Rural	1	2	8	3
Settlement	8	5	3	7
Soil	1	2	0	5
Tenant	19	6	3	5
Tenure	2	4	2	1
Transfer	0	7	7	7
Rent	1	5	10	5
Game laws	2	2	2	4
Corn/Wheat/Bread/Loaf	5	6	12	17
Food	2	4	5	4
Total	**145**	**175**	**293**	**307**

**Includes 'crops', 'corn', 'wheat', 'barley', 'malt', 'potato'.*

Appendix 2.2: Farming

East Anglia

Lemma	CON 1880	LIB 1880	CON 1885	LIB 1885	CON Mean 1886-1910	LIB Mean 1886-1910
Agriculture	56	68	53	40	39	28
Crops*	16	23	33	29	23	23
Farm	61	115	55	39	14	37
Landlord/Landowner	33	43	21	17	13	22
Tenant	54	31	22	4	5	8
Total	**220**	**280**	**184**	**129**	**94**	**118**

National

Lemma	CON 1880	LIB 1880	CON 1885	LIB 1885
Agriculture	28	6	40	28
Crops*	4	6	14	16
Farm	17	26	12	19
Landlord/Landowner	15	15	14	22
Tenant	19	6	3	5
Total	**83**	**59**	**83**	**90**

**Includes: ' crops', 'corn', 'wheat', 'barley', 'malt', and 'potato'.*

Appendix 2.3: Agricultural Labourers

East Anglia

Lemma	CON 1880	LIB 1880	CON 1885	LIB 1885	CON Mean 1886-1910	LIB Mean 1886-1910
Allotment/Smallholding	5	0	19	35	8	13
Cottage	0	0	14	9	5	6
Labourer	2	6	95	59	24	31
Land reform	68	50	158	130	45	60
Food	3	6	10	9	26	23
Total	**78**	**62**	**296**	**242**	**108**	**132**

National

Lemma	CON 1880	LIB 1880	CON 1885	LIB 1885
Allotment/Smallholding	0	4	6	10
Cottage	0	1	3	1
Labourer	0	3	28	40
Land reform	26	56	89	81
Food	2	4	5	3
Total	**28**	**68**	**131**	**136**

Appendix 2.4: Finance

East Anglia

Lemma	CON 1880	LIB 1880	CON 1885	LIB 1885	CON Mean 1886-1910	LIB Mean 1886-1910
Expenditure	14	14	14	1	5	7
Income	16	16	13	2	2	10
Money	115	32	33	23	32	38
Tax	70	59	88	36	68	96
Trade	25	13	62	77	45	47
Total	**240**	**134**	**210**	**139**	**153**	**198**

National

Lemma	CON 1880	LIB 1880	CON 1885	LIB 1885
Expenditure	17	8	13	9
Income	4	9	5	7
Money	45	11	17	6
Tax	39	26	26	47
Trade	18	32	49	57
Total	**122**	**86**	**109**	**127**

Appendix 2.5: Foreign Policy

East Anglia

Lemma	CON 1880	LIB 1880	CON 1885	LIB 1885	CON Mean 1886-1910	LIB Mean 1886-1910
Europe	39	50	16	4	4	3
Foreign	45	48	37	29	48	25
Russia	82	58	8	0	2	3
Turkey	56	62	0	0	1	1
War	122	90	52	16	54	48
Total	**344**	**308**	**113**	**49**	**109**	**80**

National

Lemma	CON 1880	LIB 1880	CON 1885	LIB 1885
Europe	75	51	18	7
Foreign	45	48	42	22
Russia	45	20	3	3
Turkey	59	46	5	1
War	101	44	16	14
Total	**325**	**209**	**83**	**47**

Appendix 2.6: Radicalism

East Anglia

Lemma	CON 1880	LIB 1880	CON 1885	LIB 1885	CON Mean 1886-1910	LIB Mean 1886-1910
Programme	1	1	5	20	12	14
Class	13	15	60	48	41	35
Reform	10	36	32	58	77	83
Poor/Poverty (people)	16	6	29	31	22	36
Radical	32	0	72	19	98	15
Total	**72**	**58**	**198**	**176**	**251**	**184**

National

Lemma	CON 1880	LIB 1880	CON 1885	LIB 1885
Programme	0	13	15	19
Class	13	33	36	47
Reform	7	17	33	26
Poor/Poverty (people)	5	5	7	13
Radical	0	5	23	8
Total	**25**	**73**	**114**	**113**

Appendix 2.7A: 'Class': most common contexts in East Anglia

Conservatives (60 mentions)	Score	Percentage of total mentions
Complaints of class legislation proposed by Liberals	12	20%
Liberals creating divisions in classes	9	15%
Conservatives being the friends of the working class	7	12%
Condition of the working class	10	17%

Liberals (48 mentions)	Score	Percentage of total mentions
Turbulence in the relationships between classes	12	25%
Condition of the working class	10	21%
Rural classes	6	13%
Working class and education	4	8%
Working class and religion	4	8%

Appendix 2.7B: 'Poor'/'Poverty': most common contexts in East Anglia

Conservatives (29 mentions)	Score	Percentage of total mentions
Wages and food	7	24%
Local Option	8	28%
Religion	4	14%
Radical interference	4	14%

Liberals (31 mentions)	Score	Percentage of total mentions
Rural poor	6	19%
Lack of land and property	4	13%
General hardship	4	13%
Exploitation by rich	3	10%
Fishing interest	2	6%

Appendix 2.7C: 'Working Men'/'Working Class', most common contexts in East Anglia

Conservatives (38 mentions)	Score	Percentage of total mentions
Conservatives the best friends	14	37%
Wages/food/conditions	13	34%

Liberals (36 mentions)	Score	Percentage of total mentions
Liberals the best friends	13	36%
Wages/food/conditions	10	28%
Exploitation by rich	6	17%
Conservatives dislike working classes	3	8%

Appendix 2.8: Religion

East Anglia

Lemma	CON 1880	LIB 1880	CON 1885	LIB 1885	CON Mean 1886-1910	LIB Mean 1886-1910
Anglican	0	0	0	0	0	0
Catholic	0	2	3	3	6	7
Christian	7	8	8	15	2	5
Church	13	22	111	105	25	30
Clergy	2	1	10	8	2	4
Conscience	3	3	4	8	5	4
Disestablishment	0	2	51	26	6	7
God	5	7	7	7	13	13
Holy	1	0	0	1	0	0
Nonconformist/Dissenter	2	17	17	5	9	8
Priest	0	0	0	0	3	1
Protestant	0	1	0	1	6	6
Providence	2	4	0	4	0	0
Religion	12	8	21	27	10	17
Ritual	3	0	0	0	0	0
Spiritual	0	0	0	2	0	1
Disendowment	0	1	14	5	1	2
Total	**50**	**76**	**246**	**217**	**89**	**107**

National

Lemma	CON 1880	LIB 1880	CON 1885	LIB 1885
Anglican	0	0	0	0
Catholic	1	2	0	2
Christian	0	1	5	2
Church	7	42	66	59
Clergy	2	2	1	2
Conscience	11	4	5	8
Disestablishment	2	14	25	22
God	0	2	5	4
Holy	0	0	0	0
Nonconformist/Dissenter	5	3	2	3
Priest	0	0	0	0
Protestant	2	1	0	1
Providence	2	0	1	6
Religion	4	5	9	8
Ritual	0	0	0	0
Spiritual	0	0	1	0
Disendowment	0	1	7	1
Total	**37**	**77**	**126**	**118**

Appendix 2.9: Education

East Anglia

Lemma	CON 1880	LIB 1880	CON 1885	LIB 1885	CON Mean 1886-1910	LIB Mean 1886-1910
School	10	7	44	58	24	15
Education	14	9	70	75	19	27
Child/Children	8	8	32	30	10	14
Total	**32**	**24**	**146**	**163**	**52**	**56**

National

Lemma	CON 1880	LIB 1880	CON 1885	LIB 1885
School	6	10	14	12
Education	23	19	37	20
Child/Children	1	10	14	10
Total	**30**	**40**	**65**	**41**

Appendix 2.10: National Leaders

East Anglia

Lemma	CON 1880	LIB 1880	CON 1885	LIB 1885	CON Mean 1886-1910	LIB Mean 1886-1910
Chamberlain	2	0	41	22	17	37
Randolph Churchill	0	0	3	17	0	0
Collings	17	3	61	15	1	1
Dilke	4	1	9	10	0	0
Disraeli/Beaconsfield	41	42	10	2	0	1
Gladstone	72	35	75	72	66	38
Goschen	3	1	4	4	3	0
Hartington/Devonshire	5	3	7	6	4	4
Mundella	0	0	0	12	0	0
Northcote	0	1	1	4	0	0
Salisbury	5	6	41	37	17	24

National

Lemma	CON 1880	LIB 1880	CON 1885	LIB 1885
Chamberlain	2	6	73	6
Randolph Churchill	0	13	3	26
Collings	0	0	5	2
Dilke	9	5	28	8
Disraeli/Beaconsfield	6	19	8	4
Gladstone	44	38	76	32
Goschen	1	2	15	7
Hartington/Devonshire	6	9	20	6
Mundella	0	0	0	0
Northcote	8	5	1	1
Salisbury	1	21	27	51

Appendix 3.1: Irish Home Rule

East Anglia

Lemma	CON 1880	LIB 1880	CON 1885	LIB 1885	CON 1886	LIB 1886	CON 1892	LIB 1892	CON 1895	LIB 1895	CON 1900	LIB 1900	CON 1906	LIB 1906	CON Jan 1910	LIB Jan 1910	CON Dec 1910	LIB Dec 1910
Ireland/Home Rule	11	17	32	37	471	561	276	269	141	50	59	30	210	138	163	12	223	90
Parnell	4	1	7	0	57	9	7	1	1	1	0	0	2	0	0	0	11	0
Ulster	0	0	0	0	9	6	11	33	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	0	8	12
Loyal	2	7	6	6	48	6	17	15	1	5	11	10	7	3	5	3	30	4
Separation	5	6	0	7	56	27	25	8	8	5	1	0	19	10	5	1	8	2
Free	8	15	86	84	9	36	45	35	16	32	6	30	15	21	11	13	9	17
Justice	7	7	3	10	34	37	6	33	11	13	15	13	7	15	7	5	9	22
Coercion	0	0	12	0	39	55	21	19	1	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Local Government	1	3	21	29	25	26	28	24	8	13	0	4	4	3	1	0	0	0
Total	**38**	**56**	**167**	**173**	**679**	**694**	**377**	**388**	**160**	**108**	**64**	**70**	**265**	**191**	**194**	**34**	**298**	**148**

National

Lemma	CON 1880	LIB 1880	CON 1885	LIB 1885	CON 1886	LIB 1886	CON 1892	LIB 1892	CON 1895	LIB 1895	CON 1900	LIB 1900	CON 1906	LIB 1906	CON Jan 1910	LIB Jan 1910	CON Dec 1910	LIB Dec 1910
Ireland/ Home Rule	40	91	34	72	422	533	564	408	175	170	63	30	133	98	61	10	140	35
Parnell	0	10	7	18	43	35	14	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	2
Ulster	0	0	0	0	15	40	23	63	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	1
Loyal	8	7	2	4	33	8	16	11	4	3	18	16	3	6	2	4	6	6
Separation	6	9	2	4	62	24	39	6	22	11	4	5	12	7	8	4	11	1
Free	11	50	62	58	12	30	17	38	12	12	23	6	24	31	7	8	11	7
Justice	12	15	6	20	22	25	33	34	11	17	16	9	13	15	12	15	5	9
Coercion	4	2	1	4	56	31	12	25	4	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Local Government	2	10	16	24	22	50	14	17	6	12	2	5	5	0	0	0	0	0
Total	**83**	**194**	**131**	**203**	**676**	**767**	**673**	**555**	**183**	**214**	**88**	**59**	**189**	**157**	**90**	**41**	**179**	**61**

Appendix 3.2: Nation and Empire

East Anglia

Lemma	CON 1880	LIB 1880	CON 1885	LIB 1885	CON 1886	LIB 1886	CON 1892	LIB 1892	CON 1895	LIB 1895	CON 1900	LIB 1900	CON 1906	LIB 1906	CON Jan 1910	LIB Jan 1910	CON Dec 1910	LIB Dec 1910
Kingdom	6	6	7	5	13	15	9	4	9	2	5	3	4	4	7	2	16	7
Britain	28	15	22	5	27	37	14	2	12	4	83	44	83	56	63	24	54	18
Nation	52	46	23	47	76	54	27	20	36	6	48	60	67	48	71	32	64	53
England	175	114	97	69	136	113	86	28	110	65	45	52	84	77	149	95	97	60
Union	3	3	2	4	50	32	15	12	16	8	8	1	7	5	5	4	10	6
Empire/Imperial	28	15	13	9	98	67	30	11	30	10	77	37	48	27	63	9	55	18
Total	**292**	**199**	**164**	**139**	**400**	**318**	**181**	**77**	**213**	**95**	**266**	**197**	**293**	**217**	**358**	**166**	**296**	**162**

National

Lemma	CON 1880	LIB 1880	CON 1885	LIB 1885	CON 1886	LIB 1886	CON 1892	LIB 1892	CON 1895	LIB 1895	CON 1900	LIB 1900	CON 1906	LIB 1906	CON Jan 1910	LIB Jan 1910	CON Dec 1910	LIB Dec 1910
Kingdom	7	5	5	10	28	9	18	7	4	10	13	2	15	5	16	7	13	6
Britain	19	24	25	13	77	44	43	37	22	16	66	59	57	42	72	46	46	33
Nation	71	36	31	11	46	100	56	65	28	45	28	25	31	71	19	30	34	55
England	45	25	106	63	151	81	128	88	104	52	20	34	25	29	20	26	25	35
Union	0	26	7	6	95	63	23	32	79	9	20	17	10	2	7	8	18	4
Empire/Imperial	45	27	23	18	66	72	70	38	29	14	93	125	58	44	50	21	54	23
Total	**187**	**143**	**197**	**121**	**463**	**369**	**338**	**267**	**266**	**146**	**240**	**262**	**196**	**193**	**184**	**138**	**190**	**156**

Appendix 3.3: Religion

East Anglia

Lemma	CON 1880	LIB 1880	CON 1885	LIB 1885	CON 1886	LIB 1886	CON 1892	LIB 1892	CON 1895	LIB 1895	CON 1900	LIB 1900	CON 1906	LIB 1906	CON Jan 1910	LIB Jan 1910	CON Dec 1910	LIB Dec 1910
Protestant	0	1	0	1	10	12	8	22	2	0	3	3	8	0	9	0	3	7
Catholic	0	2	3	3	12	13	17	28	1	2	0	2	9	1	7	0	2	4
Religion	12	8	2	27	12	20	11	22	5	26	2	10	31	17	5	7	9	8
God	5	7	7	7	0	1	2	2	4	2	3	1	4	2	3	2	4	1
Church	13	20	111	105	5	19	16	32	53	80	23	31	13	9	33	12	30	20
Ritual	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	0
Priest	0	0	0	0	5	5	8	2	2	1	0	0	6	0	2	0	5	0
Total	**30**	**38**	**123**	**143**	**44**	**70**	**62**	**108**	**67**	**111**	**31**	**47**	**71**	**29**	**59**	**21**	**53**	**40**

National

Lemma	CON 1880	LIB 1880	CON 1885	LIB 1885	CON 1886	LIB 1886	CON 1892	LIB 1892	CON 1895	LIB 1895	CON 1900	LIB 1900	CON 1906	LIB 1906	CON Jan 1910	LIB Jan 1910	CON Dec 1910	LIB Dec 1910
Protestant	2	1	0	1	27	24	16	49	0	2	2	5	2	3	0	0	0	1
Catholic	5	2	0	2	37	26	28	67	1	6	0	5	2	2	0	3	0	0
Religion	4	5	9	8	24	15	16	27	28	11	2	0	29	15	7	3	1	2
God	0	2	5	4	1	5	2	9	1	3	2	2	1	2	2	2	2	1
Church	7	15	2	59	6	13	13	29	60	24	9	20	3	14	24	32	2	4
Ritual	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Priest	0	0	0	0	1	0	5	9	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Total	**18**	**25**	**16**	**74**	**96**	**83**	**79**	**190**	**89**	**45**	**14**	**31**	**36**	**36**	**33**	**40**	**5**	**7**

Appendix 3.4: The Language of Party

East Anglia

Lemma	CON 1880	LIB 1880	CON 1885	LIB 1885	CON 1886	LIB 1886	CON 1892	LIB 1892	CON 1895	LIB 1895	CON 1900	LIB 1900	CON 1906	LIB 1906	CON Jan 1910	LIB Jan 1910	CON Dec 1910	LIB Dec 1910
Independent	8	29	9	6	20	5	5	3	2	6	12	5	5	10	11	2	8	1
Unionist	0	0	0	0	35	28	58	22	107	23	64	14	89	18	64	4	122	7
Party	110	81	158	197	127	60	161	108	148	134	190	141	174	119	160	94	218	145
Liberal	147	117	205	292	135	119	85	248	65	264	100	195	62	179	65	157	98	202
Tory/Conservative	107	104	171	197	116	129	136	180	76	205	60	208	56	163	51	158	69	221
Paper Unionist	0	0	0	0	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Liberal Unionist	0	0	0	0	15	24	10	17	14	15	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0
Total	**372**	**331**	**543**	**692**	**484**	**398**	**513**	**600**	**507**	**670**	**491**	**577**	**387**	**489**	**351**	**415**	**516**	**576**

National

Lemma	CON 1880	LIB 1880	CON 1885	LIB 1885	CON 1886	LIB 1886	CON 1892	LIB 1892	CON 1895	LIB 1895	CON 1900	LIB 1900	CON 1906	LIB 1906	CON Jan 1910	LIB Jan 1910	CON Dec 1910	LIB Dec 1910
Independent	8	9	4	8	35	10	15	12	19	5	20	28	5	13	9	2	4	2
Unionist	0	0	0	0	15	16	40	47	74	35	34	22	53	29	34	9	51	8
Party	104	148	161	157	609	507	116	99	146	155	130	133	138	108	69	56	150	78
Liberal	97	117	125	168	58	104	46	155	58	198	60	220	24	108	20	61	35	44
Tory/Conservative	20	102	96	139	65	72	36	90	45	111	11	89	8	11	5	31	7	57
Paper Unionist	0	0	0	0	9	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Liberal Unionist	0	0	0	0	10	14	2	31	5	15	2	11	0	0	0	1	1	0
Total	**229**	**376**	**387**	**473**	**815**	**748**	**294**	**485**	**421**	**554**	**291**	**524**	**227**	**269**	**138**	**160**	**247**	**189**

Appendix 3.5: Radicalism

East Anglia

Lemma	CON 1880	LIB 1880	CON 1885	LIB 1885	CON 1886	LIB 1886	CON 1892	LIB 1892	CON 1895	LIB 1895	CON 1900	LIB 1900	CON 1906	LIB 1906	CON Jan 1910	LIB Jan 1910	CON Dec 1910	LIB Dec 1910
Programme	1	1	5	20	4	15	30	27	12	38	9	12	16	8	19	6	3	5
Class	13	15	60	48	32	33	57	33	65	27	18	31	33	44	37	35	29	33
Reform	10	36	32	58	17	23	23	33	8	45	39	56	52	58	189	158	189	185
Poor/Poverty	16	6	29	31	19	15	20	25	29	35	4	23	18	26	34	45	27	30
Working men	4	7	14	27	14	17	21	64	18	43	9	26	28	33	45	22	24	9
Working class	8	1	24	9	5	4	22	18	27	11	7	7	14	18	15	19	9	5
Radical	32	0	72	19	22	13	109	18	115	19	136	8	94	13	95	3	145	38
Total	**84**	**66**	**236**	**212**	**113**	**120**	**282**	**218**	**274**	**218**	**222**	**163**	**255**	**200**	**434**	**288**	**426**	**305**

National

Lemma	CON 1880	LIB 1880	CON 1885	LIB 1885	CON 1886	LIB 1886	CON 1892	LIB 1892	CON 1895	LIB 1895	CON 1900	LIB 1900	CON 1906	LIB 1906	CON Jan 1910	LIB Jan 1910	CON Dec 1910	LIB Dec 1910
Programme	0	13	15	19	2	1	14	18	22	17	10	9	22	11	10	2	11	4
Class	13	33	36	47	49	7	27	22	60	21	28	17	27	15	50	26	51	8
Reform	7	17	33	26	4	11	27	33	20	7	15	66	55	59	89	67	163	52
Poor/Poverty	5	5	7	13	2	4	10	3	13	8	6	8	13	16	22	24	23	13
Working men	1	7	5	11	4	5	10	9	10	14	47	6	15	5	15	9	7	1
Working class	1	9	5	12	0	0	10	4	26	9	24	5	11	2	8	8	8	0
Radical	0	5	23	8	5	7	3	2	4	8	32	0	31	4	28	4	39	8
Total	**27**	**89**	**124**	**136**	**66**	**35**	**101**	**92**	**155**	**83**	**161**	**111**	**172**	**112**	**221**	**140**	**301**	**85**

Appendix 3.6: 'Ireland', 1886-1892: Common Collocates in East Anglia

LIB 1886	CON 1886	LIB 1892	CON 1892	East Anglian Average 1880-1900
People 62	England 67	People 67	England 82	Cheers 61
England 50	Gladstone 57	England 49	People 57	Government 43
Parliament 45	Cheers 56	Government 44	Gladstone 55	Conservative 32
Cheers 41	People 49	Justice 31	Government 51	Party 30
Great 36	Land 43	Power 29	Parliament 43	Great 28
Gladstone 32	Parliament 42	Cheers 29	Great 38	*Local Words 24
Hear, hear 31	Great 38	Great 27	Cheers 38	Hear. Hear 24
Representatives 23	Country 34	Parliament 26	Year 30	Laugher 23
Empire 21	Hear, hear 33	Tory 26	Laugh 27	Time 23
Justice 19	Separate 29	Year 24	Party 26	Year 21
Legislation 19	Party 26	Liberal 23	Sctoland 26	People 20
Time 19	Landlord 24	Gladstone 23	Policy 23	England 20
Coercion 17	Laws 21	Hear, hear 23	Separation 23	War 18
Britain 16	Time 21	Coercion 19	Power 20	Tory 18
Year 16	Loyal 20	Boards 19	Legislation 20	Support 14
Principle 15	Britain 20	Trust 19	Peace 20	Parliament 13
Salisbury 15	Justice 19	Criminal/Crime 18	Local 18	Liberal 12
Local 14	Union 19	Right 17	Hear, hear 18	Tory 12
Union 14	Coercion 19	Church 17	Loyal 16	Friend 12
Friend 14	Parnell 18	Catholic 17	United 16	Power 11
Party 13	Empire/Imperialism 17	Ulster 15	Radical 16	Church 11
Separate 12	Liberal 17	Protestant 14	Conservative 13	Labour 10
Liberal 12	Legislation 16	Landlord 14	Radical 13	Tax 10
Right 11	Local 14	Shame 13	Liberal 13	Representatives 9
Scotland 11	Election 14	Peace 13	Nationalist 13	Radical 9
Support 10	Conservative 13	History 12	Grievance 11	Free 8
The past 10	Tax 13	Principle 12	Pprotestant 11	Right 8
History 9	Representatives 13	Landlord 10	Britain 11	Gladstone 7
Laughter 8	Scotland 12	Laughter 9	Justice 11	Class 7
Tory 8	National League 11	Land 8	Prosperity 10	Labourer 7
Land 8	Many 11	Education 8	Support 10	Principle 7
America 8	Laughter 11	Coercion 8	Representatives 10	Local 7
Majesty 7	Labour 8	Free 8	Crime/Criminal 10	Education 6
Control 7	Labourer 8	Unionist 6	Justice 10	Empire/Imperial 6
Free 6	Ulster 8	Past 6	Unionist 9	Salisbury 5
Conservative 6	Friend 8	1886 6	Land 9	Unionist 5
Conviction 6	Class 8	Scotland 6	1886 9	
Century 6	Land purchase 7	*Local Words 6	Nonconformist 9	
Wales 6	Loyal 7	Wales 4	Catholic 7	
Love 6	*Local Words 6			
Westminster 5				

Samples all weighted to be equivalent to 10,000 words. 'Background' represents the mean scores for the whole corpus between 1880 and 1900, and is there to add context.

*Local Words: Refers to East Anglian place names, and is an aggregate score.

Appendix 4.1: Social Reform, 1895-1900

East Anglia

Lemma	CON 1895	LIB 1895	CON 1900	LIB 1900	CON Mean 1880-92	LIB Mean 1880-92
School/Education/Child	37	44	53	69	74	55
Pension	4	21	11	39	5	4
Allotments/ Smallholdings	3	26	1	3	19	30
Liability	6	8	3	4	1	2
Housing	25	30	9	9	21	23
Compensation	11	5	18	15	4	4
Total	**86**	**134**	**95**	**139**	**123**	**117**

National

Lemma	CON 1895	LIB 1895	CON 1900	LIB 1900	CON Mean 1880-92	LIB Mean 1880-92
School/Education/Child	55	8	17	6	40	39
Pension	1	14	26	6	1	1
Allotments/ Smallholdings	7	10	6	11	4	9
Liability	14	11	2	1	1	1
Housing	12	8	7	14	3	11
Compensation	18	13	13	2	1	4
Total	**107**	**64**	**71**	**40**	**51**	**65**

Appendix 4.2: The War, 1895-1900

East Anglia

Lemma	CON 1895	LIB 1895	CON 1900	LIB 1900	CON Mean 1880-92	LIB Mean 1880-92
Boer	0	0	64	31	0	0
Kruger	0	0	22	11	0	0
War	8	3	227	222	54	29
Transvaal	0	0	50	7	0	0
Ammunition	8	0	6	1	0	0
Gun	0	1	6	6	1	1
Army	4	1	44	29	11	12
Soldier	3	0	32	14	5	6
Military	0	1	17	5	2	3
Traitor	0	0	6	3	2	0
Battle	4	23	8	10	7	12
Roberts	0	0	6	10	0	0
Troop	0	0	12	15	2	2
Defend	8	9	21	7	8	12
Fight	16	54	47	44	16	21
Victory	19	14	9	16	5	9
Africa	3	0	142	61	4	1
Enemy	4	3	7	3	4	2
Diplomacy	0	0	6	27	1	1
Peace	5	3	28	12	27	15
Opponent	37	21	33	30	41	24
Majuba	0	0	15	4	0	0
Navy	3	3	24	8	8	4
Total	**122**	**136**	**832**	**576**	**195**	**152**

Appendix 4.2 continued overleaf…

National

Lemma	CON 1895	LIB 1895	CON 1900	LIB 1900	CON Mean 1880-92	LIB Mean 1880-92
Boer	0	0	55	47	0	0
Kruger	0	0	40	28	0	0
War	9	7	155	234	26	25
Transvaal	0	0	20	25	0	1
Ammunition	1	1	3	0	0	0
Gun	0	0	2	5	1	1
Army	3	5	14	55	7	7
Soldier	2	1	19	12	2	2
Military	0	2	28	25	3	5
Traitor	0	0	1	3	0	1
Battle	4	9	4	9	8	7
Roberts	0	0	8	3	0	0
Troop	0	0	2	3	3	1
Defend	11	8	18	19	11	10
Fight	3	11	11	17	17	10
Victory	3	12	6	9	3	6
Africa	1	3	77	109	5	3
Enemy	1	3	6	16	3	2
Diplomacy	5	0	4	16	1	1
Peace	7	74	18	28	18	19
Opponent	35	23	33	20	23	22
Majuba	0	0	9	8	0	0
Navy	2	6	4	2	3	2
Total	**87**	**165**	**537**	**693**	**136**	**125**

Appendix 4.3: Religion

East Anglia

Lemma	CON 1880	LIB 1880	CON 1885	LIB 1885	CON 1886	LIB 1886	CON 1892	LIB 1892	CON 1895	LIB 1895	CON 1900	LIB 1900	CON 1906	LIB 1906	CON Jan 1910	LIB Jan 1910	CON Dec 1910	LIB Dec 1910
Protestant	0	1	0	1	10	12	8	22	2	0	3	3	8	0	9	0	3	7
Catholic	0	2	3	3	12	13	17	28	1	2	0	2	9	1	7	0	2	4
Religion	12	8	2	27	12	20	11	22	5	26	2	10	31	17	5	7	9	8
God	5	7	7	7	0	1	2	2	4	2	3	1	4	2	3	2	4	1
Church	13	20	111	105	5	19	16	32	53	80	23	31	13	9	33	12	30	20
Ritual	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	0
Priest	0	0	0	0	5	5	8	2	2	1	0	0	6	0	2	0	5	0
Total	**30**	**38**	**123**	**143**	**44**	**70**	**62**	**108**	**67**	**111**	**31**	**47**	**71**	**29**	**59**	**21**	**53**	**40**

National

Lemma	CON 1880	LIB 1880	CON 1885	LIB 1885	CON 1886	LIB 1886	CON 1892	LIB 1892	CON 1895	LIB 1895	CON 1900	LIB 1900	CON 1906	LIB 1906	CON Jan 1910	LIB Jan 1910	CON Dec 1910	LIB Dec 1910
Protestant	2	1	0	1	27	24	16	49	0	2	2	5	2	3	0	0	0	1
Catholic	5	2	0	2	37	26	28	67	1	6	0	5	2	2	0	3	0	0
Religion	4	5	9	8	24	15	16	27	28	11	2	0	29	15	7	3	1	2
God	0	2	5	4	1	5	2	9	1	3	2	2	1	2	2	2	2	1
Church	7	15	2	59	6	13	13	29	60	24	9	20	3	14	24	32	2	4
Ritual	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Priest	0	0	0	0	1	0	5	9	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Total	**18**	**25**	**16**	**74**	**96**	**83**	**79**	**190**	**89**	**45**	**14**	**31**	**36**	**36**	**33**	**40**	**5**	**7**

Appendix 4.4: The Language of Battle

East Anglia

Lemma	CON 1895	LIB 1895	CON 1900	LIB 1900	CON Mean 1880-92	LIB Mean 1880-92
Duty	27	20	23	21	21	24
Honour	31	20	31	26	31	20
Brave	1	0	5	8	4	1
Loyal	2	5	11	10	18	9
Opponent	37	21	33	30	41	24
Strong/Strength	34	32	64	44	30	37
Defeat	13	19	15	8	7	9
Total	**145**	**117**	**182**	**147**	**153**	**124**

National

Lemma	CON 1895	LIB 1895	CON 1900	LIB 1900	CON Mean 1880-92	LIB Mean 1880-92
Duty	28	24	19	33	30	32
Honour	24	21	20	16	29	24
Brave	0	0	3	3	1	1
Loyal	4	3	20	16	10	7
Opponent	35	23	33	20	23	22
Strong/Strength	9	19	36	48	36	36
Defeat	6	19	6	8	4	7
Total	**106**	**109**	**137**	**144**	**134**	**129**

Appendix 4.5: Britishness and Englishness

East Anglia

Lemma	CON 1895	LIB 1895	CON 1900	LIB 1900	CON 1906	LIB 1906	CON Jan 1910	LIB Jan 1910	CON Dec 1910	LIB Dec 1910	CON Mean 1880-92	LIB Mean 1880-92
British (all variants)	12	4	83	44	83	53	63	24	53	18	23	15
English (all variants)	110	65	117	51	84	77	149	95	97	60	123	94

National

Lemma	CON 1895	LIB 1895	CON 1900	LIB 1900	CON 1906	LIB 1906	CON Jan 1910	LIB Jan 1910	CON Dec 1910	LIB Dec 1910	CON Mean 1880-92	LIB Mean 1880-92
British (all variants)	22	16	67	59	57	42	72	46	46	33	37	26
English (all variants)	112	52	41	34	25	29	20	26	25	35	128	81

Appendix 4.6: The Vocabulary of Reason

East Anglia

Lemma	CON 1880	LIB 1880	CON 1885	LIB 1885	CON 1886	LIB 1886	CON 1892	LIB 1892	CON 1895	LIB 1895	CON 1900	LIB 1900	CON 1906	LIB 1906	CON Jan 1910	LIB Jan 1910	CON Dec 1910	LIB Dec 1910
Intelligence	1	3	2	5	5	6	2	5	0	5	1	4	0	5	7	8	3	2
Mind	13	20	21	14	22	25	13	21	13	14	15	26	18	15	13	20	17	29
Rationality	0	1	0	0	1	3	2	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	3	0	0
Reason	21	26	20	19	24	31	24	27	30	32	27	42	35	38	27	33	47	45
Sense	13	12	13	15	13	11	9	9	8	9	12	7	7	11	5	13	2	10
Stupid/Fool	4	3	3	2	0	1	4	0	2	4	3	11	0	5	2	7	0	1
Opinion	35	46	32	32	57	21	22	24	23	39	41	45	18	16	30	19	31	18
Debate	2	0	0	3	8	0	3	0	4	4	2	1	0	0	3	0	6	2
Argue	4	3	15	11	13	12	6	3	7	6	7	10	23	9	16	21	23	13
Idea	9	4	7	11	8	9	13	11	8	16	6	6	5	6	7	12	4	10
Understand	13	26	16	12	16	21	6	22	17	9	12	14	3	9	13	16	9	13
Total	**115**	**144**	**129**	**124**	**167**	**140**	**104**	**122**	**112**	**138**	**126**	**166**	**111**	**114**	**123**	**152**	**142**	**143**

Appendix 4.7: The Vocabulary of Passion

East Anglia

Lemma	CON 1880	LIB 1880	CON 1885	LIB 1885	CON 1886	LIB 1886	CON 1892	LIB 1892	CON 1895	LIB 1895	CON 1900	LIB 1900	CON 1906	LIB 1906	CON Jan 1910	LIB Jan 1910	CON Dec 1910	LIB Dec 1910
Honour	54	23	26	28	22	16	23	14	31	20	31	26	18	8	10	10	13	17
Pride	6	13	7	9	6	9	14	7	12	11	12	10	3	4	5	9	8	9
Love	8	7	9	1	8	6	0	7	1	4	6	7	2	9	1	2	1	7
Total	**68**	**43**	**42**	**38**	**36**	**31**	**37**	**28**	**44**	**35**	**49**	**43**	**23**	**21**	**16**	**21**	**22**	**33**

Appendix 4.8: The Drink Issue

East Anglia

Lemma	CON 1892	LIB 1892	CON 1895	LIB 1895	CON 1900	LIB 1900	CON Mean 1880-92	LIB Mean 1880-92
Beer	7	5	38	38	2	2	6	3
Temperance	3	6	6	10	21	21	1	1
Brewer	1	1	13	15	8	8	3	4
Veto	0	3	23	30	2	2	2	2
Liquor	0	3	2	2	0	0	1	0
Licence	3	4	2	14	16	16	3	7
Public House/Publican	7	7	31	22	9	9	4	4
Total	**21**	**29**	**115**	**131**	**58**	**58**	**20**	**20**

National

Lemma	CON 1892	LIB 1892	CON 1895	LIB 1895	CON 1900	LIB 1900	CON Mean 1880-92	LIB Mean 1880-92
Beer	0	0	3	9	5	3	0	2
Temperance	1	8	36	24	2	12	1	3
Brewer	0	2	3	8	0	3	0	1
Veto	1	1	14	9	5	0	1	3
Liquor	1	7	8	9	2	0	0	2
Licence	0	7	9	9	0	3	0	3
Public House/Publican	0	2	11	7	1	3	1	2
Total	**3**	**27**	**84**	**75**	**15**	**24**	**4**	**15**

Appendix 4.9: Audience Reactions

East Anglia

Lemma	CON 1880	LIB 1880	CON 1885	LIB 1885	CON 1886	LIB 1886	CON 1892	LIB 1892	CON 1895	LIB 1895	CON 1900	LIB 1900	CON 1906	LIB 1906	CON Jan 1910	LIB Jan 1910	CON Dec 1910	LIB Dec 1910
Cheers	275	271	318	385	408	296	214	283	303	422	271	202	182	301	250	327	240	306
Applause	119	57	63	64	23	50	84	46	38	26	170	165	181	103	151	152	145	127
Laughter	110	108	128	114	118	106	146	100	113	107	133	112	67	176	89	122	97	164
Total	**504**	**436**	**509**	**563**	**549**	**452**	**444**	**429**	**454**	**555**	**574**	**479**	**430**	**580**	**490**	**601**	**482**	**597**

Appendix 4.10: Empire

East Anglia

Lemma	CON 1880	LIB 1880	CON 1885	LIB 1885	CON 1886	LIB 1886	CON 1892	LIB 1892	CON 1895	LIB 1895	CON 1900	LIB 1900	CON 1906	LIB 1906	CON Jan 1910	LIB Jan 1910	CON Dec 1910	LIB Dec 1910
Britain	28	15	22	5	27	37	14	2	12	4	83	44	83	53	63	24	53	18
Colony	11	14	36	8	16	11	13	5	11	1	49	31	91	70	44	16	26	8
Flag	9	1	3	2	10	3	7	1	2	4	31	8	6	12	6	1	2	6
Empire/Imperial	28	15	13	9	98	67	30	11	30	10	77	37	48	27	63	9	55	18
Total	**76**	**45**	**74**	**24**	**151**	**118**	**64**	**19**	**55**	**19**	**240**	**120**	**228**	**162**	**176**	**50**	**136**	**50**

National

Lemma	CON 1880	LIB 1880	CON 1885	LIB 1885	CON 1886	LIB 1886	CON 1892	LIB 1892	CON 1895	LIB 1895	CON 1900	LIB 1900	CON 1906	LIB 1906	CON Jan 1910	LIB Jan 1910	CON Dec 1910	LIB Dec 1910
Britain	19	24	25	13	77	44	43	37	22	16	66	59	57	42	72	46	46	33
Colony	23	35	22	12	1	8	21	10	12	1	120	58	68	29	20	18	6	4
Flag	0	2	1	1	4	1	3	0	2	4	8	12	2	4	4	6	3	2
Empire/Imperial	45	27	23	18	66	72	70	38	29	14	93	125	58	44	50	21	54	23
Total	**87**	**88**	**71**	**44**	**148**	**125**	**137**	**85**	**65**	**35**	**287**	**254**	**185**	**119**	**146**	**91**	**109**	**62**

Appendix 5.1: Unionism and Tariff Reform in East Anglia, 1906-10

General Election 1906

Constituency	Candidate (s)	Position
Eye	Unop.	n/a
Stowmarket	W.E. Guiness	HH
Lowestoft	F.A. Lucas	WH
Woodbridge	E.F. Pretyman	WH
Sudbury	W.C. Quilter (LU)	HH
Ipswich	C. Dalrymple & S.J.Hoare	HH and HH
Bury	F.W.F. Hervey	WH
Norfolk NW	W.J. Lancaster	HH
Norfolk N	F.T.S.Rippingall	WH
Norfolk Mid	W.L. Boyle (LU)	WH
Norfolk East	R.F. Boileau	WH
Norfolk Sth	E. Mann	WH
Norfolk SW	T.L. Hare	WH
Norwich	E.E. Wild	HH
King's Lynn	A.H. Burgoyne	WH
Yarmouth	A. Fell	WH

General Election January 1910

Constituency	Candidate (s)	Position
Eye	Marquis of Graham	WH
Stowmarket	F.B.H. Goldsmith	WH
Lowestoft	H.S. Foster	WH
Woodbridge	R.F. Peel	WH
Sudbury	W.E.C Quilter	WH
Ipswich	A.C. Churchman & B.H. Burton	WH and WH
Bury	W.E. Guinness	WH
Norfolk NW	N.P. Jodrell	WH
Norfolk N	H.D. King	WH
Norfolk Mid	W.L. Boyle	WH
Norfolk East	C.E. Fitch	WH
Norfolk Sth	E.R.A. Kerrison	WH
Norfolk SW	T.L. Hare	WH
Norwich	S. Hoare & H. Snowden	WH and WH
King's Lynn	E.C. Cadogan	WH
Yarmouth	A. Fell	WH

Appendix 5.1 continued overleaf

General Election December 1910

Constituency	Candidate (s)	Position
Eye	G. Borwick	WH
Stowmarket	F.B.H. Goldsmith	WH
Lowestoft	H.S. Foster	WH
Woodbridge	R.F. Peel	WH
Sudbury	W.E.C Quilter	WH
Ipswich	A.C. Churchman & B.H. Burton	WH and WH
Bury	W.E. Guinness	WH
Norfolk NW	N.P. Jodrell	WH
Norfolk N	H.D. King	WH
Norfolk Mid	W.L. Boyle	WH
Norfolk East	F.C. Meyer	WH
Norfolk Sth	T.S. Timmis	WH
Norfolk SW	A.E.S. Clarke	WH
Norwich	W. Dyson	WH
King's Lynn	H. Ingleby	WH
Yarmouth	A. Fell	WH

Notes

WH= Whole-Hogger, HH= Half-Hogger (or Balfourite in 1906), FF= Free-Fooder

King's Lynn in 1906 also featured T. Bowles, the former Unionist MP, who fought as an independent free-trader.

Appendix 5.2: Labour's National Speeches, 1906-1910

As reported in The Times from 1906-1910 compared to Liberal and Conservative national speakers at elections 1906-1910.

Lemma	CON 1906	LIB 1906	CON Jan 1910	LIB Jan 1910	CON Dec 1910	CON Dec 1910	LAB 1906-1910
£	12	29	10	15	17	1	60
Capital	6	5	29	37	14	2	48
Class	27	15	50	26	51	10	104
Conditions	32	26	20	30	22	20	46
Income	3	5	6	23	0	1	30
labour (not inc. 'Labour')	50	17	15	21	4	8	64
Mining/Miner/Mine	5	3	1	2	0	0	12
Social	12	14	19	16	14	24	44
Socialism	5	0	24	11	22	8	248
Society	2	5	3	2	4	4	20
Trades Union	13	4	1	2	8	1	88
Women	0	17	9	1	2	10	82
Worker	2	11	4	4	9	3	62
Working man/People/Class	31	12	31	28	24	8	74
Church	3	14	24	32	2	4	2
Factory	1	2	1	2	1	0	8
Finance	2	15	42	41	14	10	16
Land	4	21	31	120	29	37	52
Man	83	258	105	155	96	112	202
Money	4	20	23	37	16	15	30
Nationalisation	2	15	3	2	4	5	8
Pauper	5	8	0	2	2	1	4
Poor	10	25	18	16	20	12	24
Private	6	13	12	2	1	4	18
Tax	13	57	90	155	16	27	40
Value/Valuation	5	8	12	53	12	11	16
Wage	0	1	0	3	13	7	10
Work/Employment	118	97	140	169	109	50	166
Foreign	44	29	59	51	25	12	0
Gentleman	77	57	30	34	36	30	6
Ireland/ Home Rule	135	99	61	10	143	95	8
Markets	28	17	40	26	17	5	8
Reform	56	59	90	67	163	74	38

Labour Lemmas (in order of distinctness)
Socialism
Trades Union
Capital
Worker
Income
Mining
Society
£
Social
Labour
Working man
Class
Conditions

Non-Labour Lemmas (in order of distinctness)
Home Rule
Reform
Gentleman
Foreign
Markets

Appendix 5.3: Labour in Norwich, 1906-1910

Note that because this is just one constituency, each party's instalment is smaller: 7,500 words per election, so 22,500 words each overall.

Lemma	CON	LIB	LAB
£	9	6	9
Capital	22	3	6
Church	5	1	10
Class	27	20	34
Conditions	9	7	4
Factory	8	7	24
Foreign	28	22	11
Gentleman	7	7	9
Human	0	0	5
Industrial	15	9	15
Ireland/Irish/ Home Rule	44	26	3
labour (not inc. 'Labour')	12	8	25
Land	13	9	34
Landlord	6	3	24
Man	76	65	62
Markets	11	1	8
Money	6	13	10
Nationalisation	6	2	9
Poor	15	8	14
Poverty	1	4	7
Railway	0	0	10
Reform	52	72	22
Religion	9	1	14
Social	6	7	14
Socialism	45	51	21
Tax	4	46	17
Trades Union	8	4	3
Valuation	6	4	12
Wage	0	0	10
Women	2	5	14
Worker	6	11	22
Working Class/Man/People	26	12	25

Lemmas Labour mentioned twice as often or more than Liberals				
capital	human	markets	religion	women
church	labour	nationalisation	social	worker
class	land	railway	valuation	Working
factory	landlord	religion	wage	Christian

Lemmas Labour mentioned twice as often or more than Conservatives				
church	income	poverty	tax	women
factory	land	railway	valuation	worker
human	landlord	social	wage	Christian

Lemmas Labour mentioned half as often as both Conservatives *and* Liberals			
socialism	reform	foreign	Home Rule

Appendix 5.4: Social Reform

East Anglia

Lemma	CON 1906	LIB 1906	CON Jan 1910	LIB Jan 1910	CON Dec 1910	LIB Dec 1910	CON Mean 1880-1900	LIB Mean 1880-1900
Poor law	0	0	6	4	4	7	1	3
Pension	0	18	41	133	13	35	6	13
Land reform	14	36	32	75	32	50	53	50
Allotment/Smallholding	1	13	0	2	1	9	13	21
Labour exchange	4	1	8	12	1	1	0	0
Insurance	1	4	0	0	0	7	3	1
Sick/Ill/Health/Medical	6	2	18	7	8	16	12	14
Compensation	9	9	1	0	0	6	7	6
Social reform	1	6	5	0	8	17	1	2
Social	3	17	4	7	8	25	3	10
Society	5	3	3	0	7	14	8	3
Total	**44**	**109**	**118**	**240**	**82**	**187**	**107**	**123**

National

Lemma	CON 1906	LIB 1906	CON Jan 1910	LIB Jan 1910	CON Dec 1910	LIB Dec 1910
Poor law	1	2	1	2	6	0
Pension	0	5	13	26	5	3
Land reform	3	17	25	96	23	21
Allotment/Smallholding	10	0	0	0	0	0
Labour exchange	9	1	3	8	1	1
Insurance	6	6	2	7	2	1
Sick/Ill/Health/Medical	6	9	8	11	10	9
Compensation	2	2	0	3	3	0
Social reform	5	6	5	3	6	1
Social	12	14	19	16	14	11
Society	2	6	5	3	6	3
Total	**55**	**68**	**82**	**174**	**75**	**50**

Appendix 5.5A: Free Trade

East Anglia

Lemma	CON 1906	LIB 1906	CON Jan 1910	LIB Jan 1910	CON Dec 1910	LIB Dec 1910	CON Mean 1880-1900	LIB Mean 1880-1900
Free trade	67	80	40	63	25	33	4	5
Bread/Loaf	38	28	53	54	13	16	6	4
Food	38	65	57	42	50	29	4	5
Corn	33	42	9	20	12	19	4	4
Wheat	29	10	13	23	13	9	1	1
Total	**205**	**225**	**172**	**202**	**113**	**106**	**19**	**19**

National

Lemma	CON 1906	LIB 1906	CON Jan 1910	LIB Jan 1910	CON Dec 1910	LIB Dec 1910
Free trade	31	42	12	15	12	9
Bread/Loaf	0	3	8	15	11	5
Food	8	15	15	27	10	1
Corn	3	5	3	9	2	0
Wheat	1	0	8	0	9	0
Total	**43**	**66**	**45**	**65**	**42**	**15**

Appendix 5.5B: Tariff Reform

East Anglia

Lemma	CON 1906	LIB 1906	CON Jan 1910	LIB Jan 1910	CON Dec 1910	LIB Dec 1910	CON Mean 1880-1900	LIB Mean 1880-1900
Tariff reform	36	31	188	150	132	100	0	0
Fiscal	66	24	7	9	5	0	0	0
Duties	17	18	61	56	28	37	17	18
Colonial Preference	10	29	12	7	19	7	0	0
Protection	47	173	44	51	13	11	13	20
Total	**176**	**275**	**312**	**273**	**197**	**155**	**30**	**38**

National

Lemma	CON 1906	LIB 1906	CON Jan 1910	LIB Jan 1910	CON Dec 1910	LIB Dec 1910
Tariff reform	30	52	99	65	97	44
Fiscal	34	44	50	7	18	4
Duties	27	44	63	48	27	6
Colonial preference	5	4	15	6	4	0
Protection	47	74	16	39	9	7
Total	**143**	**219**	**243**	**165**	**155**	**62**

Appendix 5.5C: The People's Budget

East Anglia

Lemma	CON 1906	LIB 1906	CON Jan 1910	LIB Jan 1910	CON Dec 1910	LIB Dec 1910	CON Mean 1880-1900	LIB Mean 1880-1900
Budget	0	0	154	154	78	65	4	6
Valuation	7	9	10	39	14	10	10	13
Lloyd George	5	3	23	18	48	23	4	0
Total	**12**	**12**	**187**	**211**	**140**	**98**	**21**	**22**

National

Lemma	CON 1906	LIB 1906	CON Jan 1910	LIB Jan 1910	CON Dec 1910	LIB Dec 1910
Budget	0	0	85	103	13	50
Valuation	4	7	10	45	10	5
Lloyd George	12	9	15	19	26	4
Total	**20**	**31**	**121**	**199**	**51**	**60**

Appendix 5.5D: The Navy

East Anglia

Lemma	CON 1906	LIB 1906	CON Jan 1910	LIB Jan 1910	CON Dec 1910	LIB Dec 1910	CON Mean 1880-1900	LIB Mean 1880-1900
Navy	28	13	63	32	37	21	10	5
Ship	9	13	23	21	4	9	3	2
Dreadnought	0	0	6	10	1	3	0	0
Fleet	3	2	25	5	2	7	1	1
Total	**40**	**28**	**117**	**68**	**44**	**40**	**14**	**8**

National

Lemma	CON 1906	LIB 1906	CON Jan 1910	LIB Jan 1910	CON Dec 1910	LIB Dec 1910
Navy	2	9	18	11	11	2
Ship	0	0	0	0	1	2
Dreadnought	1	1	3	0	0	0
Fleet	1	0	2	2	0	4
Total	**4**	**10**	**23**	**12**	**12**	**8**

Appendix 5.5E: Chinese Labour

East Anglia

Lemma	CON 1906	LIB 1906	CON Jan 1910	LIB Jan 1910	CON Dec 1910	LIB Dec 1910	CON Mean 1880-1900	LIB Mean 1880-1900
China/Chinese	109	80	3	4	5	0	0	0
Slave	26	11	3	0	2	0	0	0
Mine	24	37	3	2	1	0	0	0
Total	**159**	**128**	**9**	**6**	**8**	**0**	**0**	**0**

National

Lemma	CON 1906	LIB 1906	CON Jan 1910	LIB Jan 1910	CON Dec 1910	LIB Dec 1910
China/Chinese	35	22	2	2	2	0
Slave	23	2	2	1	0	1
Mine	13	12	6	9	8	1
Total	**71**	**35**	**10**	**12**	**10**	**2**

Appendix 5.5F: House of Lords

East Anglia

Lemma	CON 1906	LIB 1906	CON Jan 1910	LIB Jan 1910	CON Dec 1910	LIB Dec 1910	CON Mean 1880-1900	LIB Mean 1880-1900
House of Lords/Peers	7	32	189	198	263	380	10	24
Veto	0	0	12	15	28	66	5	4
Total	**7**	**32**	**201**	**213**	**291**	**446**	**15**	**28**

National

Lemma	CON 1906	LIB 1906	CON Jan 1910	LIB Jan 1910	CON Dec 1910	LIB Dec 1910
House of Lords/Peers	8	12	221	161	171	125
Veto	6	0	12	6	8	18
Total	**14**	**12**	**233**	**168**	**179**	**144**

Appendix 5.5G: The Referendum

East Anglia

Lemma	CON 1906	LIB 1906	CON Jan 1910	LIB Jan 1910	CON Dec 1910	LIB Dec 1910	CON Mean 1880-1900	LIB Mean 1880-1900
Referendum	0	0	0	0	27	35	0	0
Total	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**35**	**47**	**0**	**0**

National

Lemma	CON 1906	LIB 1906	CON Jan 1910	LIB Jan 1910	CON Dec 1910	LIB Dec 1910
Referendum	0	0	0	1	59	45
Total	**0**	**0**	**0**	**1**	**59**	**45**

Appendix 5.6: Class

East Anglia

Lemma	CON 1880	LIB 1880	CON 1885	LIB 1885	CON 1886	LIB 1886	CON 1892	LIB 1892	CON 1895	LIB 1895	CON 1900	LIB 1900	CON 1906	LIB 1906	CON Jan 1910	LIB Jan 1910	CON Dec 1910	LIB Dec 1910
Class	13	16	60	48	32	33	60	33	66	27	18	31	33	44	37	35	29	33
Worker/Workmen /Working	17	9	45	53	25	31	53	75	55	59	36	49	81	89	101	72	63	30
Total	**30**	**25**	**105**	**101**	**57**	**64**	**113**	**108**	**121**	**86**	**54**	**80**	**114**	**133**	**138**	**107**	**92**	**63**

National

Lemma	CON 1880	LIB 1880	CON 1885	LIB 1885	CON 1886	LIB 1886	CON 1892	LIB 1892	CON 1895	LIB 1895	CON 1900	LIB 1900	CON 1906	LIB 1906	CON Jan 1910	LIB Jan 1910	CON Dec 1910	LIB Dec 1910
Class	13	21	38	47	45	7	28	23	61	22	28	17	27	15	50	26	51	8
Worker/Workmen /Working	7	17	23	35	9	14	38	26	54	41	85	33	43	27	55	44	40	13
Total	**20**	**38**	**61**	**82**	**54**	**21**	**66**	**49**	**115**	**63**	**113**	**50**	**70**	**42**	**105**	**70**	**91**	**21**

Appendix 5.7: National Leaders

East Anglia

Lemma	CON 1906	LIB 1906	CON Jan 1910	LIB Jan 1910	CON Dec 1910	LIB Dec 1910
Arthur Balfour	47	72	21	27	30	36
Joseph Chamberlain	39	133	8	12	2	8
Andrew Bonar Law	0	0	0	0	0	2
David Lloyd George	5	3	23	18	48	23
Henry Campbell-Bannerman	53	22	1	1	0	0
Herbert Asquith	0	2	28	11	48	29
Winston Churchill	0	0	8	0	9	4

National

Lemma	CON 1906	LIB 1906	CON Jan 1910	LIB Jan 1910	CON Dec 1910	LIB Dec 1910
Arthur Balfour	17	79	13	29	19	28
Joseph Chamberlain	21	76	6	21	4	3
Andrew Bonar Law	0	0	1	0	7	0
David Lloyd George	12	9	15	19	26	4
Henry Campbell-Bannerman	13	12	0	1	0	0
Herbert Asquith	9	10	6	5	19	3
Winston Churchill	3	14	23	32	2	4

Appendix 5.8A: **Tariff Reform: the Appeal to Producers**

East Anglia

Lemma	CON 1906	LIB 1906	CON Jan 1910	LIB Jan 1910	CON Dec 1910	LIB Dec 1910
Produce	21	9	42	34	22	10
Factory	20	5	8	6	4	3
Industry	27	22	18	28	18	4
Manufacture	48	13	36	65	6	11
Total	**116**	**49**	**104**	**133**	**50**	**28**

National

Lemma	CON 1906	LIB 1906	CON Jan 1910	LIB Jan 1910	CON Dec 1910	LIB Dec 1910
Produce	22	14	69	21	16	10
Factory	2	4	5	3	3	2
Industry	36	26	52	41	12	8
Manufacture	22	17	25	24	9	0
Total	**82**	**61**	**151**	**89**	**39**	**20**

Appendix 5.8B: **Tariff Reform: the Appeal to Consumers**

East Anglia

Lemma	CON 1906	LIB 1906	CON Jan 1910	LIB Jan 1910	CON Dec 1910	LIB Dec 1910
Consume	15	5	10	19	4	6
Bread/Loaf	43	29	65	52	16	18
Food	41	67	58	42	47	28
Other Consumables*	12	7	25	8	2	7
Total	**111**	**108**	**158**	**121**	**69**	**59**

National

Lemma	CON 1906	LIB 1906	CON Jan 1910	LIB Jan 1910	CON Dec 1910	LIB Dec 1910
Consume	9	8	19	8	4	1
Bread/Loaf	0	3	8	15	11	5
Food	8	15	15	27	10	1
Other Consumables*	0	3	5	9	4	4
Total	**17**	**29**	**47**	**59**	**29**	**11**

**Includes 'butter', 'beef', 'eggs', 'milk', 'tobacco', and 'cheese'*

APPENDIX C
Candidates in East Anglia, 1880-1910

The General Election of 1880

Constituency	CON Candidate(s)	LIB Candidate(s)
East Suffolk	Lord Rendlesham F.St.J.N. Barne	R.L. Everett R.H.M. Elwes*
West Suffolk	W. Biddell T. Thornhill	Unop.
Ipswich	T.C. Cobbold J.R. Bulwer	J. Collings H.W. West
Bury St. Edmunds	E. Greene Lord Francis-Hervey	J.A. Hardcastle
Eye	E.A. Bartlett	C. Easton
North Norfolk	E. Birkbeck E.H.K. Lacon (Unop.)	Unop.
West Norfolk	W.T. Amherst G.W.P. Bentinck	A. Hammond
South Norfolk	R.J. Buxton C.S. Read	R.T. Gurdon
Norwich	H. Harben W.F.B.M. Mainwaring	J.J. Colman J.H. Tillett
King's Lynn	R. Bourke Lord Claud Hamilton	W.H.B Ffolkes F. Lockwood

Note
* R.H.M. Elwes withdrew halfway through the contest.

The General Election of 1885

Constituency	CON Candidate(s)	LIB Candidate(s)
Eye	B.B. Hunter Rodwell	F.S. Stevenson
Stowmarket	T. Thornhill	F.T. Cobbold
Lowestoft	H.C. Bagot-Chester	S.B. Crossley
Woodbridge	Lord Rendlesham	R.L. Everett
Sudbury	T. Weller-Poley	W.C. Quilter
Ipswich	W.T. Charley E.M. Ind	J. Collings H.W. West
Bury St. Edmunds	Lord Francis Hervey	J.A. Hardcastle
Norfolk North West	H. Cavendish-Bentinck	J. Arch
Norfolk North	S. Hoare	H.H. Cozens-Hardy
Norfolk Mid	A.E. Fellowes	R.T. Gurdon
Norfolk East	E. Birkbeck	P. Falk
Norfolk South	R.J. Buxton	F. Taylor
Norfolk South West	W.T. Amherst	W.B. Gurdon
Norwich	H. Bullard	J.J. Colman R. Wright
King's Lynn	R. Bourke	W.H.B. Ffolkes
Yarmouth	H.W. Tyler	C.W. Norton

The General Election of 1886

Constituency	CON Candidate(s)	LIB Candidate(s)
Eye	J.C.R. Reade (LU)	F.S. Stevenson
Stowmarket	E. Greene	E.N. Buxton
Lowestoft	S.B. Crossley (LU)	Unop.
Woodbridge	R.H. Lloyd-Anstruther	R.L. Everett
Sudbury	W.C. Quilter (LU)	Unop.
Ipswich	C. Dalrymple Lord Elcho	S.J. Stern B.T.L Thomson
Bury St. Edmunds	Lord Francis Hervey	F. Goodwin
Norfolk North West	H. Cavendish-Bentinck	J. Arch
Norfolk North	A.E. Fellowes	H.H. Cozens-Hardy
Norfolk Mid	R.T. Gurdon (LU)	J. Toller
Norfolk East	E. Birkbeck	H. Lee-Warner
Norfolk South	F. Taylor (LU)	Unop.
Norfolk South West	W.T. Amherst	Unop.
Norwich	S. Hoare C.S. Read	J.J Colman J.H. Tillett
King's Lynn	R. Bourke	J.J. Briscoe
Yarmouth	H.W. Tyler	C.W. Norton

The General Election of 1892

Constituency	CON Candidate(s)	LIB Candidate(s)
Eye	L.R. Holland	F.S. Stevenson
Stowmarket	Viscount Chelsea	S.J. Stern
Lowestoft	H.S. Foster	J. Judd
Woodbridge	R.H. Lloyd-Anstruther	R.L. Everett
Sudbury	W.C. Quilter (LU)	A. Ogilvie
Ipswich	C. Dalrymple Lord Elcho	D.F. Goddard A.W Soames
Bury St. Edmunds	Lord Francis Hervey	J.E. Jameson
Norfolk North West	H. Cavendish-Bentinck	J. Arch
Norfolk North	J.Cator	H.H. Cozens-Hardy
Norfolk Mid	R.T. Gurdon (LU)	C. Higgins
Norfolk East	E. Birkbeck	R.J. Price
Norfolk South	F. Taylor (LU)	A. Kitching
Norfolk South West	T.L. Hare	H. Lee-Warner
Norwich	S. Hoare	J.J. Colman, J. Bedford
King's Lynn	T. Bowles	T.R. Kemp
Yarmouth	H.W. Tyler	J.M. Moorsom

The General Election of 1895

Constituency	CON Candidate(s)	LIB Candidate(s)
Eye	F.J.W. Issaacson	F.S. Stevenson
Stowmarket	I.Z. Malcolm	H. De R. Walker
Lowestoft	H.S Foster	A. Sington
Woodbridge	E. Pretyman	R.L. Everett
Sudbury	W.C. Quilter (LU)	Unop.
Ipswich	C. Dalrymple Lord Elcho	D.F. Goddard A.W. Soames
Bury St. Edmunds	Lord Francis Hervey	Unop.
Norfolk North West	E.K.B. Tighe	J. Arch
Norfolk North	K.H. Kemp	H.H. Cozens-Hardy
Norfolk Mid	R.T. Gurdon (LU)	F.W. Wilson
Norfolk East	H. Rider-Haggard	R.J. Price
Norfolk South	F. Taylor (LU)	T.H. Dolbey
Norfolk South West	T.L. Hare	R. Winfrey
Norwich	S. Hoare H. Bullard	T. Terrell F.W. Verney
King's Lynn	T. Bowles	H. Beaumont
Yarmouth	J.C.R Colomb	J.M. Moorsom

The General Election of 1900

Constituency	CON Candidate(s)	LIB Candidate(s)
Eye	H.D. Harben	F.S. Stevenson
Stowmarket	I.Z. Malcolm	J.C. Horobin
Lowestoft	F.A. Lucas	A. Adams
Woodbridge	E. Pretyman	F.T. Cobbold
Sudbury	W.C. Quilter (LU)	Unop.
Ipswich	C. Dalrymple J.F. Rawlinson	D.F. Goddard N.E. Buxton
Bury St. Edmunds	Lord Francis Hervey	Unop.
Norfolk North West	W.H.B. Ffolkes (LU)	G. White
Norfolk North	H.S. Follett	Sir W.B. Gurdon
Norfolk Mid	W.L. Boyle (LU)	F.W. Wilson
Norfolk East	W.L. Prioleau	R.J. Price
Norfolk South	E. Mann	A.W. Soames
Norfolk South West	T.L. Hare	R. Winfrey
Norwich	S. Hoare, H. Bullard	Unop.
King's Lynn	T. Bowles	F.H. Booth
Yarmouth	J.C.R Colomb	Unop.

The General Election of 1906

Constituency	CON Candidate(s)	LIB Candidate(s)
Eye	Unop.	Unop.
Stowmarket	W.E. Guinness	G.A. Hardy
Lowestoft	F.A. Lucas	E. Beauchamp
Woodbridge	E. Pretyman	R.L. Everett
Sudbury	W.C. Quilter (LU)	W.C. Heaton-Armstrong
Ipswich	Dalrymple S.J. Hoare	D.F. Goddard F.T. Cobbold
Bury St. Edmunds	Lord Francis Hervey	W.B. Yates
Norfolk North West	W.J. Lancaster	G. White
Norfolk North	F.T.S. Rippingall	W.B. Gurdon
Norfolk Mid	W.L. Boyle (LU)	Lord Wodehouse
Norfolk East	R.F. Boileau	R.J. Price
Norfolk South	E. Mann	A.W. Soames
Norfolk South West	T.L. Hare	R. Winfrey
Norwich	E.E. Wild	L.J. Tillett
King's Lynn	A.H. Burgoyne	C.W. Bellairs
Yarmouth	A. Fell	J.M. White

Others

* T. Bowles (Ind. Unionist), King's Lynn

* G.H. Roberts (Lab), Norwich

The General Election of January 1910

Constituency	CON Candidate(s)	LIB Candidate(s)
Eye	Marquess of Graham	W.H.M Pearson[†]
Stowmarket	F.B.H. Goldsmith	G.A. Hardy
Lowestoft	H.S. Foster	E. Beauchamp
Woodbridge	R.F. Peel	C.S. Buxton
Sudbury	W.E.C Quilter	F.W. Hirst
Ipswich	A.C. Churchman B.H. Burton	D.F. Goddard F.T. Cobbold
Bury St. Edmunds	W.E. Guinness	Unop.
Norfolk North West	N.P. Jodrell	G. White
Norfolk North	H.D. King	N.E. Buxton
Norfolk Mid	W.L. Boyle (LU)	W.R. Lester
Norfolk East	C.E. Fitch	R.J. Price
Norfolk South	E.R.A. Kerrison	A.W. Soames
Norfolk South West	T.L. Hare	R. Winfrey
Norwich	S. Hoare and H. Snowden	F. Low
King's Lynn	E.C. Cadogan	T. Bowles
Yarmouth	A. Fell	J.E. Platt
	Other	
	* G.H. Roberts (Lab), Norwich	

[†] W.H.M. Pearson was absent ill throughout this entire election campaign, and did not deliver a single reported speech. He thus does not appear in the Liberal corpus subsection for this general election.

The General Election of December 1910

Constituency	CON Candidate(s)	LIB Candidate(s)
Eye	G. Borwick	W.H.M Pearson
Stowmarket	F.B.H. Goldsmith	R.L. Barclay
Lowestoft	H.S. Foster	E. Beauchamp
Woodbridge	R.F. Peel	W.R. Elliston
Sudbury	W.E.C Quilter	Unop.
Ipswich	A.C. Churchman B.H. Burton	D.F. Goddard F.T. Cobbold
Bury St. Edmunds	W.E. Guinness	Unop.
Norfolk North West	N.P. Jodrell	G. White
Norfolk North	H.D. King	N.E. Buxton
Norfolk Mid	W.L. Boyle (LU)	W.R. Lester
Norfolk East	F.C. Meyer	R.J. Price
Norfolk South	T.S. Timmis	A.W. Soames
Norfolk South West	A.E.S. Clarke	R. Winfrey
Norwich	W. Dyson	F. Low
King's Lynn	H. Ingleby	T. Bowles
Yarmouth	A. Fell	J.E. Platt

Other

* G.H. Roberts (Lab), Norwich

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